AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1630-1930

POETRY

CONTEMPLATIONS
Anne Bradstreet
(c. 1612 – September 16, 1672)

Some time now past in the Autumnal Tide,
  When Phoebus wanted but one hour to bed,
The trees all richly clad, yet void of pride
  Were gilded o'er by his rich golden head.
Their leaves and fruits, seem'd painted, but was true
  Of green, of red, of yellow, mixed hue,
Rapt were my senses at this delectable view.

I wist not what to wish, yet sure, thought I,
  If so much excellence abide below,
How excellent is He that dwells on high!
  Whose power and beauty by his works we know;
Sure he is goodness, wisdom, glory, light,
  That hath this underworld so richly dight:
More Heaven than Earth was here, no winter and no night.

Then on a stately oak I cast mine eye,
  Whose ruffling top the clouds seem'd to aspire;
How long since thou wast in thine infancy?
  Thy strength, and stature, more thy years admire;
Hath hundred winters past since thou wast born,
  Or thousand since thou breakest thy shell of horn?
If so, all these as naught Eternity doth scorn.

I heard the merry grasshopper then sing,
  The black-clad cricket bear a second part,
They kept one tune, and played on the same string,
  Seeming to glory in their little art.
Shall creatures abject thus their voices raise?
  And in their kind resound their Master's praise:
Whilst I, as mute, can warble forth no higher lays.

When I behold the heavens as in their prime,
  And then the earth (though old) still clad in green,
The stones and trees, insensible of time,

Nor age nor wrinkle on their front are seen;
If winter come, and greenness then do fade,
A spring returns, and they more youthful made;
But Man grows old, lies down, remains where once he's
laid.

GRIDIWOKAG--1635. [Maine]

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Quaint Epitaphs*, by Various

Beneath this stone now dead to grief
Lies Grid the famous Wokag chief.
Pause here and think you learned prig,
This man was once an Indian big.
Consider this, ye lowly one,
This man was once a big in--jun.
Now he lies here, you too must rot,
As sure as pig shall go to pot.

In the same churchyard.

Here Betsy Brown her body lies.
Her soul is flying in the skies.
While here on earth she oftimes spun
Six hundred skeins from sun to sun,
And wove one day, her daughter brags,
Two hundred pounds of carpet rags.

JAFFREY. [New Hampshire]

A free negro, Amos Fortune, settled in Jaffrey more than one hundred years ago, though warned off as a possible pauper, and left one quaint bit of history--his estate, to the town. Part of it bought the communion service still in use (1895.) On the gravestone of his wife is this inscription:--

Sacred to the memory of Violate, by purchase the Slave of Amos Fortune, by marriage his wife, by fidelity his companion and solace, and by his death his widow.

ROWLEY. [Massachusetts]

Ezekiel Rogers, Minister
Died in 1660.

With the youth he took great pains, and was a tree of knowledge laden
with fruit which the children could reach.

Epitaph of Rev. Jonathan Mitchel, pastor of the first church in
Cambridge. Died July 9, 1668.

Here lies the darling of his time
Mitchel expired in his prime.
Who four years short of forty seven
Was found full ripe and plucked for Heaven.

NORFOLK. [Connecticut]

Lieut. Nathan Davis.
Died in 1781.

Death is a debt that's justly due,
That I have paid and so must you.

Elizabeth, wife of Nathan Davis.
Died 1786.

This debt I owe is justly due,
And I am come to sleep with you.

THE ADVENTURES OF SIMON SWAUGUM, A VILLAGE MERCHANT[30]
Written in 1768.
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Poems of Philip Freneau, Volume I*

PRELIMINARY PARTICULARS

Sprung from a race that had long till'd the soil,
And first disrobed it of its native trees,
He wish'd to heir their lands, but not their toil,
And thought the ploughman's life no life of ease;--
"'Tis wrong (said he) these pretty hands to wound
"With felling oaks, or delving in the ground:
"I, who at least have forty pounds in cash
"And in a country store might cut a dash,
"Why should I till these barren fields (he said)
"I who have learnt to cypher, write and read,
"These fields that shrubs, and weeds, and brambles bear,

"That pay me not, and only bring me care!"
Some thoughts had he, long while, to quit the sod,
In sea-port towns to try his luck in trade,
But, then, their ways of living seem'd most odd--
For dusty streets to leave his native shade,
From grassy plats to pebbled walks removed--
The more he thought of them, the less he loved:
The city springs he could not drink, and still
Preferr'd the fountain near some bushy hill:
And yet no splendid objects there were seen,
No distant hills, in gaudy colours clad,
Look where you would, the prospect was but mean,
Scrub oaks, and scatter'd pines, and willows sad--
Banks of a shallow river, stain'd with mud;
A stream, where never swell'd the tide of flood,
Nor lofty ship her topsails did unlose,
Nor sailor sail'd, except in long canoes.
It would have puzzled Faustus, to have told,
What did attach him to this paltry spot;
Where even the house he heir'd was very old,
And all its outworks hardly worth a groat:
Yet so it was, the fancy took his brain
A country shop might here some custom gain:
Whiskey, he knew, would always be in vogue,
While there are country squires to take a cogue,
Laces and lawns would draw each rural maid,
And one must have her shawl, and one her shade.--

THE SHOP DESCRIBED AND THE MERCHANT'S OUTSET

Hard by the road a pigmy building stood,
Thatch'd was its roof, and earthen were its floors;
So small its size, that, in a jesting mood,
It might be call'd a house turn'd out of doors--
Yet here, adjacent to an aged oak,
Full fifty years old dad his hams did smoke,
Nor ceas'd the trade, 'till worn with years and spent,
To Pluto's smoke-house he, himself, was sent.
Hither our merchant turn'd his curious eye,
And mused awhile upon this sable shell;
"Here father smoked his hogs (he said) and why
"In truth, may not our garret do as well?"
So, down he took his hams and bacon flitches,
Resolv'd to fill the place with other riches;
From every hole and cranny brush'd the soot,
And fixt up shelves throughout the crazy hut;
A counter, too, most cunningly was plann'd,
Behind whose breast-work none but he might stand,

Excepting now and then, by special grace,
Some brother merchant from some other place.
    Now, muster'd up his cash, and said his prayers,
In Sunday suit he rigs himself for town,
Two raw-boned steeds (design'd for great affairs)
Are to the waggon hitch'd, old Bay and Brown;
Who ne'er had been before a league from home,
But now are doom'd full many a mile to roam,
Like merchant-ships, a various freight to bring
Of ribbons, lawns, and many a tawdry thing.
Molasses too, blest sweet, was not forgot,
And island Rum, that every taste delights,
And teas, for maid and matron must be bought,
Rosin and catgut strings for fiddling wights--
But why should I his invoice here repeat?
'Twould be like counting grains in pecks of wheat.
Half Europe's goods were on his invoice found,
And all was to be bought with forty pound!
    Soon as the early dawn proclaim'd the day,
He cock'd his hat with pins, and comb'd his hair:
Curious it was, and laughable to see
The village-merchant, mounted in his chair:
Shelves, piled with lawns and linens, in his head,
Coatings and stuffs, and cloths, and scarlets red--
All that would suit man, woman, girl, or boy;
Muslins and muslinets, jeans, grograms, corduroy.
    Alack! said I, he little, little dreams
That all the cash he guards with studious care--
His cash! the mother of a thousand schemes,
Will hardly buy a load of earthen ware!
But why should I excite the hidden tear
By whispering truths ungrateful to his ear;
Still let him travel on, with scheming pate,
As disappointment never comes too late.--

HIS JOURNEY TO THE METROPOLIS; AND MERCANTILE TRANSACTIONS

Through woods obscure and rough perplexing ways,
Slow and alone, he urged the clumsy wheel;
Now stopping short, to let his horses graze,
Now treating them with straw and Indian meal:
At length a lofty steeple caught his eye,
"Higher (thought he) than ever kite did fly:--
But so it is, these churchmen are so proud
They ever will be climbing to a cloud;
Bound on a sky-blue cruise, they always rig
The longest steeple, and the largest wig."
    Now safe arrived upon the pebbled way,

Where well-born steeds the rattling coaches trail,
Where shops on shops are seen--and ladies gay
Walk with their curtains some, and some their veil;
Where sons of art their various labors shew
And one cries fish! and one cries muffins ho!
Amaz'd, alike, the merchant, and his pair
Of scare-crow steeds, did nothing else but stare;
So new was all the scene, that, smit with awe,
They grinn'd, and gaz'd, and gap'd at all they saw,
And often stopp'd, to ask at every door,
"Sirs, can you tell us where's the cheapest store!"
    "The cheapest store (a sly retailer said)
"Cheaper than cheap, guid faith, I have to sell;
"Here are some colour'd cloths that never fade:
"No other shop can serve you half so well;
"Wanting some money now, to pay my rent,
"I'll sell them at a loss of ten per cent.--
"Hum-hums are here--and muslins--what you please--
"Bandanas, baftas, pullcats, India teas;
"Improv'd by age, and now grown very old,
"And given away, you may depend--not sold!"
    Lured by the bait the wily shopman laid,
He gave his steeds their mess of straw and meal,
Then gazing round the shop, thus, cautious said,
"Well, if you sell so cheap, I think we'll deal;
"But pray remember, 'tis for goods I'm come,
"For, as to polecats, we've enough at home--
"Full forty pounds I have, and that in gold
"(Enough to make a trading man look bold)
"Unrig your shelves, and let me take a peep;
"'Tis odds I leave them bare, you sell so cheap."
    The city merchant stood, with lengthen'd jaws;
And stared awhile, then made this short reply--
    "You clear my shelves! (he said)--this trunk of gauze
"Is more than all your forty pounds can buy:--
"On yonder board, whose burthen seems so small
"That one man's pocket might contain it all,
"More value lies, than you and all your race
"From Adam down, could purchase or possess."
    Convinced, he turn'd him to another street,
Where humbler shopmen from the crowd retreat;
Here caught his eye coarse callicoes and crape,
Pipes and tobacco, ticklenburghs and tape.
Pitchers and pots, of value not so high
But he might sell, and forty pounds would buy.
    Some jugs, some pots, some fifty ells of tape,
A keg of wine, a cask of low proof rum,
Bung'd close--for fear the spirit should escape
That many a sot was waiting for at home;

A gross of pipes, a case of home-made gin,
Tea, powder, shot--small parcels he laid in;
Molasses, too, for swichell[A]-loving wights,
(Swichell, that wings Sangrado's boldest flights,
When bursting forth the wild ideas roll,
Flash'd from that farthing-candle, call'd his soul:)
All these he bought, and would have purchased more,
To furnish out his Lilliputian store;
But cash fell short--and they who smiled while yet
The cash remain'd, now took a serious fit:--
No more the shop-girl could his talk endure,
But, like her cat, sat sullen and demure.--
The dull retailer found no more to say,
But shook his head, and wish'd to sneak away,
Leaving his house-dog, now, to make reply,
And watch the counter with a lynx's eye.--
Our merchant took the hint, and off he went,
Resolv'd to sell at twenty-five per cent.

[A] Molasses and water: A beverage much used in the eastern states.--_Freneau's note._

THE MERCHANT'S RETURN

Returning far o'er many a hill and stone
And much in dread his earthen ware would break,
Thoughtful he rode, and uttering many a groan
Lest at some worm-hole vent his cask should leak--
His cask, that held the joys of rural squire
Which even, 'twas said, the parson did admire,
And valued more than all the dusty pages
That Calvin penn'd, and fifty other sages--
Once high in fame--beprais'd in verse and prose,
But now unthumb'd, enjoy a sweet repose.
At dusk of eve he reach'd his old abode,
Around him quick his anxious townsmen came,
One ask'd what luck had happ'd him on the road,
And one ungear'd the mud-bespatter'd team.
While on his cask each glanced a loving eye,
Patient, to all he gave a brisk reply--
Told all that had befallen him on his way,
What wonders in the town detain'd his stay--
"Houses as high as yonder white-oak tree
"And boats of monstrous size that go to sea,
"Streets throng'd with busy folk, like swarming hive;
"The Lord knows how they all contrive to live--
"No ploughs I saw, no hoes, no care, no charge,
"In fact, they all are gentlemen at large,

"And goods so thick on every window lie,
"They all seem born to sell--and none to buy."

THE CATASTROPHE, OR THE BROKEN MERCHANT

Alack-a-day! on life's uncertain road
How many plagues, what evils must befal;--
Jove has on none unmingled bliss bestow'd,
But disappointment is the lot of all:
Thieves rob our stores, in spite of locks and keys,
Cats steal our cream, and rats infest our cheese,
The gayest coat a grease-spot may assail,
Or Susan pin a dish-clout to its tail,--
    Our village-merchant (trust me) had his share
Of vile mis-haps--for now, the goods unpackt,
Discover'd, what might make a deacon swear,
Jugs, cream-pots, pipes, and grog-bowls sadly crackt--
A general groan throughout the crowd was heard;
Most pitied him, and some his ruin fear'd;
Poor wight! 'twas sad to see him fret and chafe,
While each enquir'd, "Sir, is the rum-cask safe?"
    Alas! even that some mischief had endured;--
One rascal hoop had started near the chine!--
Then curiously the bung-hole they explored,
With stem of pipe, the leakage to define--
Five gallons must be charged to loss and gain!--
"--Five gallons! (cry'd the merchant, writh'd with pain)
"Now may the cooper never see full flask,
"But still be driving at an empty cask--
"Five gallons might have mellowed down the 'squire
"And made the captain strut a full inch higher;
"Five gallons might have prompted many a song,
"And made a frolic more than five days long:
"Five gallons now are lost, and--sad to think,
"That when they leak'd--no soul was there to drink!"
    Now, slightly treated with a proof-glass dram,
Each neighbour took his leave, and went to bed,
All but our merchant: he, with grief o'ercome,
Revolv'd strange notions in his scheming head--
"For losses such as these, (thought he) 'tis meant,
"That goods are sold at twenty-five per cent:
"No doubt these trading men know what is just,
"'Tis twenty-five times what they cost at first!"
    So rigging off his shelves by light of candle,
The dismal smoke-house walls began to shine:
Here, stood his tea-pots--some without a handle--
A broken jar--and there his keg of wine;
Pipes, many a dozen, ordered in a row;

Jugs, mugs, and grog-bowls--less for sale than show:
The leaky cask, replenish'd from the well,
Roll'd to its birth--but we no tales will tell.--
    Catching the eye in elegant display,
All was arranged and snug, by break of day:
The blue dram-bottle, on the counter plac'd,
Stood, all prepared for him that buys to taste;--
Sure bait! by which the man of cash is taken,
As rats are caught by cheese or scraps of bacon.
    Now from all parts the rural people ran,
With ready cash, to buy what might be bought:
One went to choose a pot, and one a pan,
And they that had no pence their produce brought,
A hog, a calf, safe halter'd by the neck;
Potatoes (Ireland's glory) many a peck;
Bacon and cheese, of real value more
Than India's gems, or all Potosi's ore.
    Some questions ask'd, the folks began to stare--
No soul would purchase, pipe, or pot, or pan:
Each shook his head--hung back--"Your goods so dear!
"In fact (said they) the devil's in the man!
"Rum ne'er shall meet my lips (cry'd honest Sam)
"In shape of toddy, punch, grog, sling, or dram;
"No cash of mine you'll get (said pouting Kate)
"While gauze is valued at so dear a rate."
    Thus things dragg'd on for many a tedious day;
No custom came; and nought but discontent
Gloom'd through the shop.--"Well, let them have their way,
(The merchant said) I'll sell at cent per cent,
"By which, 'tis plain, I scarce myself can save,
"For cent per cent is just the price I gave."
    "Now! (cry'd the squire who still had kept his pence)
"Now, Sir, you reason like a man of sense!
"Custom will now from every quarter come;
"In joyous streams shall flow the inspiring rum,
"'Till every soul in pleasing dreams be sunk,
"And even our Socrates himself--is drunk!"
    Soon were the shelves disburthen'd of their load;
In three short hours the kegs of wine ran dry--
Swift from its tap even dull molasses flow'd;
Each saw the rum cask wasting, with a sigh--
The farce concluded, as it was foreseen--
With empty shelves--long trust--and law suits keen--
The woods resounding with a curse on trade,--
An empty purse--sour looks--and hanging head.--

"Here lies a worthy corpse (Sangrado said)
"Its debt to Commerce now, no doubt, is paid.--
"Well--'twas a vile disease that kill'd it, sure,
"A quick consumption, that no art could cure!
"Thus shall we all, when life's vain dream is out,
"Be lodg'd in corners dark, or kick'd about!
"Time is the tapster of our race below,
"That turns the key, and bids the juices flow:
"Quitting my books, henceforth be mine the task
"To moralize upon this empty cask--
"Thank heaven we've had the taste--so far 'twas well;
"And still, thro' mercy, may enjoy the smell!"

EPILOGUE[31]

Well!--strange it is, that men will still apply
Things to themselves, that authors never meant:
Each country merchant asks me, "Is it I
On whom your rhyming ridicule is spent?"
Friends, hold your tongues--such myriads of your race
Adorn Columbia's fertile, favour'd climes,
A man might rove seven years from place to place
Ere he would know the subject of my rhymes.--
Perhaps in Jersey is this creature known,
Perhaps New-England claims him for her own:
And if from Fancy's world this wight I drew,
What is the imagin'd character to you?"

THE RIVULET.
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poetical Works* of William Cullen Bryant

This little rill, that from the springs
Of yonder grove its current brings,
Plays on the slope awhile, and then
Goes prattling into groves again,
Oft to its warbling waters drew
My little feet, when life was new.
When woods in early green were dressed,
And from the chambers of the west
The warm breezes, travelling out,
Breathed the new scent of flowers about,
My truant steps from home would stray,

Upon its grassy side to play,
List the brown thrasher's vernal hymn,
And crop the violet on its brim,
With blooming cheek and open brow,
As young and gay, sweet rill, as thou.

And when the days of boyhood came,
And I had grown in love with fame,
Duly I sought thy banks, and tried
My first rude numbers by thy side.
Words cannot tell how bright and gay
The scenes of life before me lay.
Then glorious hopes, that now to speak
Would bring the blood into my cheek,
Passed o'er me; and I wrote, on high,
A name I deemed should never die.

Years change thee not. Upon yon hill
The tall old maples, verdant still,
Yet tell, in grandeur of decay,
How swift the years have passed away,
Since first, a child, and half afraid,
I wandered in the forest shade.
Thou, ever-joyous rivulet,
Dost dimple, leap, and prattle yet;
And sporting with the sands that pave
The windings of thy silver wave,
And dancing to thy own wild chime,
Thou laughest at the lapse of time.
The same sweet sounds are in my ear
My early childhood loved to hear;
As pure thy limpid waters run;
As bright they sparkle to the sun;
As fresh and thick the bending ranks
Of herbs that line thy oozy banks;
The violet there, in soft May dew,
Comes up, as modest and as blue;
As green amid thy current's stress,
Floats the scarce-rooted watercress;
And the brown ground-bird, in thy glen,
Still chirps as merrily as then.

Thou changest not--but I am changed
Since first thy pleasant banks I ranged;
And the grave stranger, come to see
The play-place of his infancy,
Has scarce a single trace of him
Who sported once upon thy brim.
The visions of my youth are past--

Too bright, too beautiful to last.
I've tried the world--it wears no more
The coloring of romance it wore.
Yet well has Nature kept the truth
She promised in my earliest youth.
The radiant beauty shed abroad
On all the glorious works of God,
Shows freshly, to my sobered eye,
Each charm it wore in days gone by.

Yet a few years shall pass away,
And I, all trembling, weak, and gray,
Bowed to the earth, which waits to fold
My ashes in the embracing mould,
(If haply the dark will of Fate
Indulge my life so long a date),
May come for the last time to look
Upon my childhood's favorite brook.
Then dimly on my eye shall gleam
The sparkle of thy dancing stream;
And faintly on my ear shall fall
Thy prattling current's merry call;
Yet shalt thou flow as glad and bright
As when thou met'st my infant sight.

And I shall sleep--and on thy side,
As ages after ages glide,
Children their early sports shall try,
And pass to hoary age and die.
But thou, unchanged from year to year,
Gayly shalt play and glitter here;
Amid young flowers and tender grass
Thy endless infancy shall pass;
And, singing down thy narrow glen,
Shalt mock the fading race of men.

EULALIE.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Edgar Allan Poe's Complete Poetical Works*

I dwelt alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride--
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.
Ah, less--less bright
The stars of the night

Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl--
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and careless curl.
Now Doubt--now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarte within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye--
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

1845.

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE.
Project Gutenberg's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town to-night,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,--
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country-folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charlestown shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified

By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

Then he climbed to the tower of the church,
Up the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the sombre rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade,--
Up the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of the town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath, in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay,--
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and sombre and still.

And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to the saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight,
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.

He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders, that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.

It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed,
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled,--
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farm-yard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm,--
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,
And the midnight message of Paul Revere.

TO OUR MOCKING-BIRD

Died of a cat, May, 1878. [Baltimore, MD]
The Project Gutenberg Etext of *The Poems* of Sidney Lanier

I.

Trillets of humor, -- shrewdest whistle-wit, --
Contralto cadences of grave desire
Such as from off the passionate Indian pyre
Drift down through sandal-odored flames that split
About the slim young widow who doth sit
And sing above, -- midnights of tone entire, --
Tissues of moonlight shot with songs of fire; --
Bright drops of tune, from oceans infinite
Of melody, sipped off the thin-edged wave
And trickling down the beak, -- discourses brave
Of serious matter that no man may guess, --
Good-fellow greetings, cries of light distress --
All these but now within the house we heard:
O Death, wast thou too deaf to hear the bird?

II.

Ah me, though never an ear for song, thou hast
A tireless tooth for songsters: thus of late
Thou camest, Death, thou Cat! and leap'st my gate,
And, long ere Love could follow, thou hadst passed
Within and snatched away, how fast, how fast,
My bird -- wit, songs, and all -- thy richest freight
Since that fell time when in some wink of fate
Thy yellow claws unsheathed and stretched, and cast
Sharp hold on Keats, and dragged him slow away,
And harried him with hope and horrid play --
Ay, him, the world's best wood-bird, wise with song --
Till thou hadst wrought thine own last mortal wrong.
'Twas wrong! 'twas wrong! I care not, WRONG's the word --
To munch our Keats and crunch our mocking-bird.

III.

Nay, Bird; my grief gainsays the Lord's best right.
The Lord was fain, at some late festal time,
That Keats should set all Heaven's woods in rhyme,
And thou in bird-notes. Lo, this tearful night,
Methinks I see thee, fresh from death's despite,
Perched in a palm-grove, wild with pantomime,
O'er blissful companies couched in shady thyme,
-- Methinks I hear thy silver whistlings bright
Mix with the mighty discourse of the wise,
Till broad Beethoven, deaf no more, and Keats,
'Midst of much talk, uplift their smiling eyes,
And mark the music of thy wood-conceits,
And halfway pause on some large, courteous word,
And call thee "Brother", O thou heavenly Bird!

CROSSING BROOKLYN FERRY
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman

1

Flood-tide below me! I see you face to face!
Clouds of the west--sun there half an hour high--I see you also face to face.

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes, how curious you are to me!
On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning

home, are more curious to me than you suppose,
And you that shall cross from shore to shore years hence are more
to me, and more in my meditations, than you might suppose.

2

The impalpable sustenance of me from all things at all hours of the day,
The simple, compact, well-join'd scheme, myself disintegrated, every
one disintegrated yet part of the scheme,
The similitudes of the past and those of the future,
The glories strung like beads on my smallest sights and hearings, on
the walk in the street and the passage over the river,
The current rushing so swiftly and swimming with me far away,
The others that are to follow me, the ties between me and them,
The certainty of others, the life, love, sight, hearing of others.

Others will enter the gates of the ferry and cross from shore to shore,
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide,
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and west, and the
heights of Brooklyn to the south and east,
Others will see the islands large and small;
Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross, the sun half
an hour high,
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred years hence, others
will see them,
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring-in of the flood-tide, the
falling-back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

3

It avails not, time nor place--distance avails not,
I am with you, you men and women of a generation, or ever so many
generations hence,
Just as you feel when you look on the river and sky, so I felt,
Just as any of you is one of a living crowd, I was one of a crowd,
Just as you are refresh'd by the gladness of the river and the
bright flow, I was refresh'd,
Just as you stand and lean on the rail, yet hurry with the swift
current, I stood yet was hurried,
Just as you look on the numberless masts of ships and the
thick-stemm'd pipes of steamboats, I look'd.

I too many and many a time cross'd the river of old,
Watched the Twelfth-month sea-gulls, saw them high in the air
floating with motionless wings, oscillating their bodies,
Saw how the glistening yellow lit up parts of their bodies and left
the rest in strong shadow,
Saw the slow-wheeling circles and the gradual edging toward the south,
Saw the reflection of the summer sky in the water,
Had my eyes dazzled by the shimmering track of beams,
Look'd at the fine centrifugal spokes of light round the shape of my

head in the sunlit water,
Look'd on the haze on the hills southward and south-westward,
Look'd on the vapor as it flew in fleeces tinged with violet,
Look'd toward the lower bay to notice the vessels arriving,
Saw their approach, saw aboard those that were near me,
Saw the white sails of schooners and sloops, saw the ships at anchor,
The sailors at work in the rigging or out astride the spars,
The round masts, the swinging motion of the hulls, the slender
serpentine pennants,
The large and small steamers in motion, the pilots in their pilothouses,
The white wake left by the passage, the quick tremulous whirl of the wheels,
The flags of all nations, the falling of them at sunset,
The scallop-edged waves in the twilight, the ladled cups, the
frolic-some crests and glistening,
The stretch afar growing dimmer and dimmer, the gray walls of the
granite storehouses by the docks,
On the river the shadowy group, the big steam-tug closely flank'd on
each side by the barges, the hay-boat, the belated lighter,
On the neighboring shore the fires from the foundry chimneys burning
high and glaringly into the night,
Casting their flicker of black contrasted with wild red and yellow
light over the tops of houses, and down into the clefts of streets.

4

These and all else were to me the same as they are to you,
I loved well those cities, loved well the stately and rapid river,
The men and women I saw were all near to me,
Others the same--others who look back on me because I look'd forward
to them,
(The time will come, though I stop here to-day and to-night.)

5

What is it then between us?
What is the count of the scores or hundreds of years between us?

Whatever it is, it avails not--distance avails not, and place avails not,
I too lived, Brooklyn of ample hills was mine,
I too walk'd the streets of Manhattan island, and bathed in the
waters around it,
I too felt the curious abrupt questionings stir within me,
In the day among crowds of people sometimes they came upon me,
In my walks home late at night or as I lay in my bed they came upon me,
I too had been struck from the float forever held in solution,
I too had receiv'd identity by my body,
That I was I knew was of my body, and what I should be I knew I
should be of my body.

6

It is not upon you alone the dark patches fall,

The dark threw its patches down upon me also,
The best I had done seem'd to me blank and suspicious,
My great thoughts as I supposed them, were they not in reality meagre?
Nor is it you alone who know what it is to be evil,
I am he who knew what it was to be evil,
I too knitted the old knot of contrariety,
Blabb'd, blush'd, resented, lied, stole, grudg'd,
Had guile, anger, lust, hot wishes I dared not speak,
Was wayward, vain, greedy, shallow, sly, cowardly, malignant,
The wolf, the snake, the hog, not wanting in me.
The cheating look, the frivolous word, the adulterous wish, not wanting,

Refusals, hates, postponements, meanness, laziness, none of these wanting,
Was one with the rest, the days and haps of the rest,
Was call'd by my nighest name by clear loud voices of young men as
they saw me approaching or passing,
Felt their arms on my neck as I stood, or the negligent leaning of
their flesh against me as I sat,
Saw many I loved in the street or ferry-boat or public assembly, yet
never told them a word,
Lived the same life with the rest, the same old laughing, gnawing, sleeping,
Play'd the part that still looks back on the actor or actress,
The same old role, the role that is what we make it, as great as we like,
Or as small as we like, or both great and small.

7

Closer yet I approach you,
What thought you have of me now, I had as much of you--I laid in my
stores in advance,
I consider'd long and seriously of you before you were born.

Who was to know what should come home to me?
Who knows but I am enjoying this?
Who knows, for all the distance, but I am as good as looking at you
now, for all you cannot see me?

8

Ah, what can ever be more stately and admirable to me than
mast-hemm'd Manhattan?
River and sunset and scallop-edg'd waves of flood-tide?
The sea-gulls oscillating their bodies, the hay-boat in the
twilight, and the belated lighter?
What gods can exceed these that clasp me by the hand, and with voices I
love call me promptly and loudly by my nighest name as approach?
What is more subtle than this which ties me to the woman or man that
looks in my face?
Which fuses me into you now, and pours my meaning into you?

We understand then do we not?

What I promis'd without mentioning it, have you not accepted?
What the study could not teach--what the preaching could not
accomplish is accomplish'd, is it not?

9

Flow on, river! flow with the flood-tide, and ebb with the ebb-tide!
Frolic on, crested and scallop-edg'd waves!
Gorgeous clouds of the sunset! drench with your splendor me, or the
men and women generations after me!
Cross from shore to shore, countless crowds of passengers!
Stand up, tall masts of Mannahatta! stand up, beautiful hills of Brooklyn!
Throb, baffled and curious brain! throw out questions and answers!
Suspend here and everywhere, eternal float of solution!
Gaze, loving and thirsting eyes, in the house or street or public assembly!
Sound out, voices of young men! loudly and musically call me by my
nighest name!
Live, old life! play the part that looks back on the actor or actress!
Play the old role, the role that is great or small according as one
makes it!
Consider, you who peruse me, whether I may not in unknown ways be
looking upon you;
Be firm, rail over the river, to support those who lean idly, yet
haste with the hasting current;
Fly on, sea-birds! fly sideways, or wheel in large circles high in the air;
Receive the summer sky, you water, and faithfully hold it till all
downcast eyes have time to take it from you!
Diverge, fine spokes of light, from the shape of my head, or any
one's head, in the sunlit water!
Come on, ships from the lower bay! pass up or down, white-sail'd
schooners, sloops, lighters!
Flaunt away, flags of all nations! be duly lower'd at sunset!
Burn high your fires, foundry chimneys! cast black shadows at
nightfall! cast red and yellow light over the tops of the houses!
Appearances, now or henceforth, indicate what you are,
You necessary film, continue to envelop the soul,
About my body for me, and your body for you, be hung our divinest aromas,
Thrive, cities--bring your freight, bring your shows, ample and
sufficient rivers,
Expand, being than which none else is perhaps more spiritual,
Keep your places, objects than which none else is more lasting.

You have waited, you always wait, you dumb, beautiful ministers,
We receive you with free sense at last, and are insatiate henceforward,
Not you any more shall be able to foil us, or withhold yourselves from us,
We use you, and do not cast you aside--we plant you permanently within us,
We fathom you not--we love you--there is perfection in you also,
You furnish your parts toward eternity,
Great or small, you furnish your parts toward the soul.

THE COW NEEDS A TAIL IN FLY-TIME

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Negro Folk Rhymes*, by Thomas W. Talley

Dat ole black sow, she can root in de mud,
She can tumble an' roll in de slime;
But dat big red cow, she git all mired up,
So dat cow need a tail in fly-time.

Dat ole gray hoss, wid 'is ole bob tail,
You mought buy all 'is ribs fer a dime;
But dat ole gray hoss can git a kiver on,
Whilst de cow need a tail in fly-time.

Dat Nigger Overseer, dat's a-ridin' on a mule,
Cain't make hisse'f white lak de lime;
Mosser mought take 'im down fer a notch or two,
Den de cow'd need a tail in fly-time.

FROM SLAVERY

ibid

Chile: I come from out'n slavery,
Whar de Bull-whup bust de hide;
Back dar, whar dis gineration
Natchully widdered up an' died!

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY

ibid

W'en I wus a liddle boy
I cleaned up mammy's dishes;
Now I is a great big boy,
I wears my daddy's britches.
I can knock dat Mobile Buck
An' smoke dat corncob pipe.
I can kiss dem pretty gals,
An' set up ev'ry night.

JACK AND DINAH WANT FREEDOM

ibid

Ole Aunt Dinah, she's jes lak me.
She wuk so hard dat she want to be free.

But, you know, Aunt Dinah's gittin' sorter ole;
An' she's feared to go to Canada, caze it's so col'.

Dar wus ole Uncle Jack, he want to git free.
He find de way Norf by de moss on de tree.
He cross dat river a-floatin' in a tub.
Dem Patterollers give 'im a mighty close rub.

Dar is ole Uncle Billy, he's a mighty good Nigger.
He tote all de news to Mosser a little bigger.
When you tells Uncle Billy, you wants free fer a fac';
De nex' day de hide drap off'n yo' back.

PURPLE CLOVER.
Project Gutenberg's *Poems: Three Series, Complete,* by Emily Dickinson

There is a flower that bees prefer,
And butterflies desire;
To gain the purple democrat
The humming-birds aspire.

And whatsoever insect pass,
A honey bears away
Proportioned to his several dearth
And her capacity.

Her face is rounder than the moon,
And ruddier than the gown
Of orchis in the pasture,
Or rhododendron worn.

She doth not wait for June;
Before the world is green
Her sturdy little countenance
Against the wind is seen,

Contending with the grass,
Near kinsman to herself,
For privilege of sod and sun,
Sweet litigants for life.

And when the hills are full,
And newer fashions blow,
Doth not retract a single spice
For pang of jealousy.

Her public is the noon,
Her providence the sun,
Her progress by the bee proclaimed
In sovereign, swerveless tune.

The bravest of the host,
Surrendering the last,
Nor even of defeat aware
When cancelled by the frost.

THE GLORY OF THE DAY WAS IN HER FACE

Project Gutenberg's *Fifty years & Other Poems*, by James Weldon Johnson

The glory of the day was in her face,
The beauty of the night was in her eyes.
And over all her loveliness, the grace
Of Morning blushing in the early skies.

And in her voice, the calling of the dove;
Like music of a sweet, melodious part.
And in her smile, the breaking light of love;
And all the gentle virtues in her heart.

And now the glorious day, the beauteous night,
The birds that signal to their mates at dawn,
To my dull ears, to my tear-blinded sight
Are one with all the dead, since she is gone.

A PILGRIMAGE.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems & Poèmes*, by Natalie Clifford Barney

Is that your window with the moving shade
In pilgrimage I've come so far to see?
--The air may enter, you are not afraid
Of the «great air» that plays invisibly
About your neck, moving your opened hair
(That busy shadow is perhaps your maid?)
While I must wait, as near as I may be,
Upon the sands, wishing that I were made
Like Ariel to skip accross the sea
Bringing you kisses, in small waves that bear
The prostrate happy sun-flushed evening there,

And all unseen cover you every where:
To rise up with the tide and fall on you
With lips that moisten, cling, and sting like spray--
To want you, and so wanting turn away?
Or beat my way into that prisoned hue:
Now that your window is a golden square
Cut in the darkness? Must I homeward fare
With flapping cape against the wind to fight,
Or like a sea-gull wing towards your light?

D'une plage lointaine.

THE LINE-GANG
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Mountain Interval,* by Robert Frost

Here come the line-gang pioneering by.
They throw a forest down less cut than broken.
They plant dead trees for living, and the dead
They string together with a living thread.
They string an instrument against the sky
Wherein words whether beaten out or spoken
Will run as hushed as when they were a thought.
But in no hush they string it: they go past
With shouts afar to pull the cable taut,
To hold it hard until they make it fast,
To ease away--they have it. With a laugh,
An oath of towns that set the wild at naught
They bring the telephone and telegraph.

MY PEOPLE
by Langston Hughes
The Internet Archive etext of The Crisis, 1921

Are

Singers,

Story-tellers,

Dancers,

Loud laughers in the hands of Fate —

My People.
Dish-washers,
Elevator-boys,
Ladies' maids,
Crap-shooters,
Cooks,
Waiters,
Jazzers,

Nurses of babies,
Loaders of ships,
Porters,
Hairdressers,
Comedians in vaudeville
And band-men in circuses —
Dream-singers all,
Story-tellers all.
Dancers —

God ! What dancers !
Singers —

God ! What singers !
Singers and dancers,
Dancers and laughers.
Laughers?

Yes, laughers laughers laughers-

Loud-mouthed laughers in the hands

Of Fate.

LOVE-SONGS OF THE OPEN ROAD
by Kendall Banning
The Project Gutenberg etext of
Poetry: A Magazine of Verse, Volume I
October-March, 1912-13

MORNING

The morning wind is wooing me; her lips have swept my brow.
Was ever dawn so sweet before? the land so fair as now?
The wanderlust is luring to wherever roads may lead,
While yet the dew is on the hedge. So how can I but heed?

The forest whispers of its shades; of haunts where we have been,--

And where may friends be better made than under God's green inn?
Your mouth is warm and laughing and your voice is calling low,
While yet the dew is on the hedge. So how can I but go?

NOON

The bees are humming, humming in the clover;
The bobolink is singing in the rye;
The brook is purling, purling in the valley,
And the river's laughing, radiant, to the sky!

The buttercups are nodding in the sunlight;
The winds are whispering, whispering to the pine;
The joy of June has found me; as an aureole it's crowned me
Because, oh best belovèd, you are mine!

NIGHT

In Arcady by moonlight,
(Where only lovers go),
There is a pool where only
The fairest roses grow.

Why are the moonlit roses
So sweet beyond compare?
Among their purple shadows
My love is waiting there.

* * * * *

To Arcady by moonlight
The roads are open wide,
But only joy can enter
And only joy abide.

There is the peace unending
That perfect faith can know--
In Arcady by moonlight,
Where only lovers go.

MATERNITY
ibid

One wept, whose only babe was dead,
New-born ten years ago.
"Weep not; he is in bliss," they said.
She answered, "Even so.

"Ten years ago was born in pain
A child, not now forlorn;
But oh, ten years ago in vain
A mother, a mother was born."

Alice Meynell

TO ONE UNKNOWN
ibid

I have seen the proudest stars
That wander on through space,
Even the sun and moon,
But not your face.

I have heard the violin,
The winds and waves rejoice
In endless minstrelsy,
Yet not your voice.

I have touched the trillium,
Pale flower of the land,
Coral, anemone,
And not your hand.

I have kissed the shining feet
Of Twilight lover-wise,
Opened the gates of Dawn--
Oh not your eyes!

I have dreamed unwonted things,
Visions that witches brew,
Spoken with images,
Never with you.

Helen Dudley

JEWELS
The Project Gutenberg Etext of *Love Songs*, by Sara Teasdale

If I should see your eyes again,
I know how far their look would go --
Back to a morning in the park
With sapphire shadows on the snow.

Or back to oak trees in the spring
When you unloosed my hair and kissed
The head that lay against your knees
In the leaf shadow's amethyst.

And still another shining place
We would remember -- how the dun
Wild mountain held us on its crest
One diamond morning white with sun.

But I will turn my eyes from you
As women turn to put away
The jewels they have worn at night
And cannot wear in sober day.

JAGUAR

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Sun-Up and Other Poems,* by Lola Ridge

Nasal intonations of light
and clicking tongues...
publicity of windows
stoning me with pent-up cries...
smells of abattoirs...
smells of long-dead meat.

Some day-end--
while the sand is yet cozy as a blanket
off the warm body of a squaw,
and the jaguars are out to kill...
with a blue-black night coming on
and a painted cloud
stalking the first star--
I shall go alone into the Silence...
the coiled Silence...
where a cry can run only a little way
and waver and dwindle
and be lost.

And there...
where tiny antlers clinch and strain
as life grapples in a million avid points,
and threshing things
strike and die,
letting their hate live on
in the spreading purple of a wound...
I too

will make covert of a crevice in the night,
and turn and watch...
nose at the cleft's edge.

GARDEN

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Sea Garden,* by Hilda Doolittle

I

You are clear
O rose, cut in rock,
hard as the descent of hail.

I could scrape the colour
from the petals
like spilt dye from a rock.

If I could break you
I could break a tree.

If I could stir
I could break a tree--
I could break you.

II

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters.

Fruit cannot drop
through this thick air--
fruit cannot fall into heat
that presses up and blunts
the points of pears
and rounds the grapes.

Cut the heat--
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path.

RHAPSODY ON A WINDY NIGHT
Project Gutenberg's *Prufrock and Other Observations*, by T. S. Eliot

Twelve o'clock.
Along the reaches of the street
Held in a lunar synthesis,
Whispering lunar incantations
Dissolve the floors of the memory
And all its clear relations,
Its divisions and precisions,
Every street lamp that I pass
Beats like a fatalistic drum,
And through the spaces of the dark
Midnight shakes the memory
As a madman shakes a dead geranium.

Half-past one,
The street lamp sputtered,
The street lamp muttered,
The street lamp said,
"Regard that woman
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
Which opens on her like a grin.
You see the border of her dress
Is torn and stained with sand,
And you see the corner of her eye
Twists like a crooked pin."

The memory throws up high and dry
A crowd of twisted things;
A twisted branch upon the beach
Eaten smooth, and polished
As if the world gave up
The secret of its skeleton,
Stiff and white.
A broken spring in a factory yard,
Rust that clings to the form that the strength has left
Hard and curled and ready to snap.

Half-past two,
The street lamp said,
"Remark the cat which flattens itself in the gutter,
Slips out its tongue
And devours a morsel of rancid butter."
So the hand of a child, automatic
Slipped out and pocketed a toy that was running along the quay.
I could see nothing behind that child's eye.
I have seen eyes in the street

Trying to peer through lighted shutters,
And a crab one afternoon in a pool,
An old crab with barnacles on his back,
Gripped the end of a stick which I held him.

Half-past three,
The lamp sputtered,
The lamp muttered in the dark.

The lamp hummed:
"Regard the moon,
La lune ne garde aucune rancune,
She winks a feeble eye,
She smiles into corners.
She smoothes the hair of the grass.
The moon has lost her memory.
A washed-out smallpox cracks her face,
Her hand twists a paper rose,
That smells of dust and old Cologne,
She is alone
With all the old nocturnal smells
That cross and cross across her brain.
The reminiscence comes
Of sunless dry geraniums
And dust in crevices,
Smells of chestnuts in the streets,
And female smells in shuttered rooms,
And cigarettes in corridors
And cocktail smells in bars."

The lamp said,
"Four o'clock,
Here is the number on the door.
Memory!
You have the key,
The little lamp spreads a ring on the stair,
Mount.
The bed is open; the tooth-brush hangs on the wall
Put your shoes at the door, sleep, prepare for life."

The last twist of the knife.

WINDFLOWER LEAF
by Carl Sandburg
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *American Poetry, 1922*

This flower is repeated
out of old winds, out of
old times.

The wind repeats these, it
must have these, over and
over again.

Oh, windflowers so fresh,
Oh, beautiful leaves, here
now again.

The domes over
fall to pieces.
The stones under
fall to pieces.
Rain and ice
wreck the works.
The wind keeps, the windflowers
keep, the leaves last,
The wind young and strong lets
these last longer than stones.

[SONNET] III
by Edna St. Vincent Millay
ibid

I know I am but summer to your heart,
And not the full four seasons of the year;
And you must welcome from another part
Such noble moods as are not mine, my dear.
No gracious weight of golden fruits to sell
Have I, nor any wise and wintry thing;
And I have loved you all too long and well
To carry still the high sweet breast of spring.

Wherefore I say: O love, as summer goes,
I must be gone, steal forth with silent drums,
That you may hail anew the bird and rose
When I come back to you, as summer comes.
Else will you seek, at some not distant time,
Even your summer in another clime.

I really must confess, my dear,
  I cannot help but love you,
For of all girls I ever knew,
  There's none I place above you;
But then you know it's rather hard,
  To dangle aimless at your skirt,
And watch your every movement so,
  For I am jealous, and you're a flirt.

There's half a score of fellows round,
  You smile at every one,
And as I think to pride myself for basking in the sun
Of your sweet smiles, you laugh at me,
  And treat me like a lump of dirt,
Until I wish that I were dead,
  For I am jealous, and you're a flirt.

I'm sorry that I've ever known
  Your loveliness entrancing,
Or ever saw your laughing eyes,
  With girlish mischief dancing;
'Tis agony supreme and rare
To see your slender waist a-girt
With other fellows' arms, you see,
  For I am jealous, and you're a flirt.

Now, girlie, if you'll promise me,
  To never, never treat me mean,
I'll show you in a little while,
  The best sweetheart you've ever seen;
You do not seem to know or care,
  How often you've my feelings hurt,
While flying round with other boys,
  For I am jealous, and you're a flirt.

CREPUSCULE
by E. Estlin Cummings
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Eight Harvard Poets*,

I will wade out
till my thighs are steeped in burn-
ing flowers
I will take the sun in my mouth
and leap into the ripe air
Alive
with closed eyes
to dash against darkness
in the sleeping curves of my
body
Shall enter fingers of smooth mastery
with chasteness of sea-girls
Will I complete the mystery
of my flesh
I will rise
After a thousand years
lipping
flowers
And set my teeth in the silver of the moon

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FICTION

LITTLE ANNIE'S RAMBLE.
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Twice Told Tales*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

The town-crier has rung his bell at a distant corner, and little Annie stands on her father's doorsteps trying to hear what the man with the loud voice is talking about. Let me listen too. Oh, he is telling the people that an elephant and a lion and a royal tiger and a horse with horns, and other strange beasts from foreign countries, have come to town and will receive all visitors who choose to wait upon them. Perhaps little Annie would like to go? Yes, and I can see that the pretty child is weary of this wide and pleasant street with the green trees flinging their shade across the quiet sunshine and the pavements and the sidewalks all as clean as if the housemaid had just swept them with her broom. She feels that impulse to go strolling away—that longing after the mystery of the great world—which many children feel, and which I felt in my childhood. Little Annie shall take a ramble with me. See! I do but hold out my hand, and like some bright bird in the

sunny air, with her blue silk frock fluttering upward from her white pantalets, she comes bounding on tiptoe across the street.

Smooth back your brown curls, Annie, and let me tie on your bonnet, and we will set forth. What a strange couple to go on their rambles together! One walks in black attire, with a measured step and a heavy brow and his thoughtful eyes bent down, while the gay little girl trips lightly along as if she were forced to keep hold of my hand lest her feet should dance away from the earth. Yet there is sympathy between us. If I pride myself on anything, it is because I have a smile that children love; and, on the other hand, there are few grown ladies that could entice me from the side of little Annie, for I delight to let my mind go hand in hand with the mind of a sinless child. So come, Annie; but if I moralize as we go, do not listen to me: only look about you and be merry.

Now we turn the corner. Here are hacks with two horses and stage-coaches with four thundering to meet each other, and trucks and carts moving at a slower pace, being heavily laden with barrels from the wharves; and here are rattling gigs which perhaps will be smashed to pieces before our eyes. Hitherward, also, comes a man trundling a wheelbarrow along the pavement. Is not little Annie afraid of such a tumult? No; she does not even shrink closer to my side, but passes on with fearless confidence, a happy child amidst a great throng of grown people who pay the same reverence to her infancy that they would to extreme old age. Nobody jostles her: all turn aside to make way for little Annie; and, what is most singular, she appears conscious of her claim to such respect. Now her eyes brighten with pleasure. A street-musician has seated himself on the steps of yonder church and pours forth his strains to the busy town—a melody that has gone astray among the tramp of footsteps, the buzz of voices and the war of passing wheels. Who heeds the poor organ-grinder? None but myself and little Annie, whose feet begin to move in unison with the lively tune, as if she were loth that music should be wasted without a dance. But where would Annie find a partner? Some have the gout in their toes or the rheumatism in their joints; some are stiff with age, some feeble with disease; some are so lean that their bones would rattle, and others of such ponderous size that their agility would crack the flagstones; but many, many have leaden feet because their hearts are far heavier than lead. It is a sad thought that I have chanced upon. What a company of dancers should we be! For I too am a gentleman of sober footsteps, and therefore, little Annie, let us walk sedately on.

It is a question with me whether this giddy child or my sage self have most pleasure in looking at the shop-windows. We love the silks of sunny hue that glow within the darkened premises of the spruce dry-goods men; we are pleasantly dazzled by the burnished silver and the chased gold, the rings of wedlock and the costly love-ornaments, glistening at the window of the jeweller; but Annie, more than I, seeks for a glimpse of her passing figure in the dusty looking-glasses at the hardware-stores. All that is bright and gay attracts us both.

Here is a shop to which the recollections of my boyhood as well as present partialities give a peculiar magic. How delightful to let the fancy revel on the dainties of a confectioner—those pies with such white and flaky paste, their contents being a mystery, whether rich mince with whole plums intermixed, or piquant apple delicately rose-flavored; those cakes, heart-shaped or round, piled in a lofty pyramid; those sweet little circlets sweetly named kisses; those dark majestic masses fit to be bridal-loaves at the wedding of an heiress, mountains in size, their summits deeply snow-covered with sugar! Then the mighty treasures of sugarplums, white and crimson and yellow, in large glass vases, and candy of all varieties, and those little cockles—or whatever

they are called—much prized by children for their sweetness, and more for the mottoes which they enclose, by love-sick maids and bachelors! Oh, my mouth waters, little Annie, and so doth yours, but we will not be tempted except to an imaginary feast; so let us hasten onward devouring the vision of a plum-cake.

Here are pleasures, as some people would say, of a more exalted kind, in the window of a bookseller. Is Annie a literary lady? Yes; she is deeply read in Peter Parley's tomes and has an increasing love for fairy-tales, though seldom met with nowadays, and she will subscribe next year to the Juvenile Miscellany. But, truth to tell, she is apt to turn away from the printed page and keep gazing at the pretty pictures, such as the gay-colored ones which make this shop-window the continual loitering-place of children. What would Annie think if, in the book which I mean to send her on New Year's day, she should find her sweet little self bound up in silk or morocco with gilt edges, there to remain till she become a woman grown with children of her own to read about their mother's childhood? That would be very queer.

Little Annie is weary of pictures and pulls me onward by the hand, till suddenly we pause at the most wondrous shop in all the town. Oh, my stars! Is this a toyshop, or is it fairy-land? For here are gilded chariots in which the king and queen of the fairies might ride side by side, while their courtiers on these small horses should gallop in triumphal procession before and behind the royal pair. Here, too, are dishes of chinaware fit to be the dining-set of those same princely personages when they make a regal banquet in the stateliest hall of their palace—full five feet high—and behold their nobles feasting adown the long perspective of the table. Betwixt the king and queen should sit my little Annie, the prettiest fairy of them all. Here stands a turbaned Turk threatening us with his sabre, like an ugly heathen as he is, and next a Chinese mandarin who nods his head at Annie and myself. Here we may review a whole army of horse and foot in red-and-blue uniforms, with drums, fifes, trumpets, and all kinds of noiseless music; they have halted on the shelf of this window after their weary march from Liliput. But what cares Annie for soldiers? No conquering queen is she—neither a Semiramis nor a Catharine; her whole heart is set upon that doll who gazes at us with such a fashionable stare. This is the little girl's true plaything. Though made of wood, a doll is a visionary and ethereal personage endowed by childish fancy with a peculiar life; the mimic lady is a heroine of romance, an actor and a sufferer in a thousand shadowy scenes, the chief inhabitant of that wild world with which children ape the real one. Little Annie does not understand what I am saying, but looks wishfully at the proud lady in the window. We will invite her home with us as we return.—Meantime, good-bye, Dame Doll! A toy yourself, you look forth from your window upon many ladies that are also toys, though they walk and speak, and upon a crowd in pursuit of toys, though they wear grave visages. Oh, with your never-closing eyes, had you but an intellect to moralize on all that flits before them, what a wise doll would you be!—Come, little Annie, we shall find toys enough, go where we may.

Now we elbow our way among the throng again. It is curious in the most crowded part of a town to meet with living creatures that had their birthplace in some far solitude, but have acquired a second nature in the wilderness of men. Look up, Annie, at that canary-bird hanging out of the window in his cage. Poor little fellow! His golden feathers are all tarnished in this smoky sunshine; he would have glistened twice as brightly among the summer islands, but still he has become a citizen in all his tastes and habits, and would not sing half so well without the uproar that drowns his music. What a pity that he does not know how miserable he is! There is a parrot, too, calling out, "Pretty Poll!

Pretty Poll!" as we pass by. Foolish bird, to be talking about her prettiness to strangers, especially as she is not a pretty Poll, though gaudily dressed in green and yellow! If she had said "Pretty Annie!" there would have been some sense in it. See that gray squirrel at the door of the fruit-shop whirling round and round so merrily within his wire wheel! Being condemned to the treadmill, he makes it an amusement. Admirable philosophy!

Here comes a big, rough dog—a countryman's dog—in search of his master, smelling at everybody's heels and touching little Annie's hand with his cold nose, but hurrying away, though she would fain have patted him.—Success to your search, Fidelity!—And there sits a great yellow cat upon a window-sill, a very corpulent and comfortable cat, gazing at this transitory world with owl's eyes, and making pithy comments, doubtless, or what appear such, to the silly beast.—Oh, sage puss, make room for me beside you, and we will be a pair of philosophers.

Here we see something to remind us of the town-crier and his ding-dong-bell. Look! look at that great cloth spread out in the air, pictured all over with wild beasts, as if they had met together to choose a king, according to their custom in the days of Æsop. But they are choosing neither a king nor a President, else we should hear a most horrible snarling! They have come from the deep woods and the wild mountains and the desert sands and the polar snows only to do homage to my little Annie. As we enter among them the great elephant makes us a bow in the best style of elephantine courtesy, bending lowly down his mountain bulk, with trunk abased and leg thrust out behind. Annie returns the salute, much to the gratification of the elephant, who is certainly the best-bred monster in the caravan. The lion and the lioness are busy with two beef-bones. The royal tiger, the beautiful, the untamable, keeps pacing his narrow cage with a haughty step, unmindful of the spectators or recalling the fierce deeds of his former life, when he was wont to leap forth upon such inferior animals from the jungles of Bengal.

Here we see the very same wolf—do not go near him, Annie!—the selfsame wolf that devoured little Red Riding-Hood and her grandmother. In the next cage a hyena from Egypt who has doubtless howled around the pyramids and a black bear from our own forests are fellow-prisoners and most excellent friends. Are there any two living creatures who have so few sympathies that they cannot possibly be friends? Here sits a great white bear whom common observers would call a very stupid beast, though I perceive him to be only absorbed in contemplation; he is thinking of his voyages on an iceberg, and of his comfortable home in the vicinity of the north pole, and of the little cubs whom he left rolling in the eternal snows. In fact, he is a bear of sentiment. But oh those unsentimental monkeys! The ugly, grinning, aping, chattering, ill-natured, mischievous and queer little brutes! Annie does not love the monkeys; their ugliness shocks her pure, instinctive delicacy of taste and makes her mind unquiet because it bears a wild and dark resemblance to humanity. But here is a little pony just big enough for Annie to ride, and round and round he gallops in a circle, keeping time with his trampling hoofs to a band of music. And here, with a laced coat and a cocked hat, and a riding-whip in his hand—here comes a little gentleman small enough to be king of the fairies and ugly enough to be king of the gnomes, and takes a flying leap into the saddle. Merrily, merrily plays the music, and merrily gallops the pony, and merrily rides the little old gentleman.—Come, Annie, into the street again; perchance we may see monkeys on horseback there.

Mercy on us! What a noisy world we quiet people live in! Did Annie ever read the cries of London city? With what lusty lungs doth yonder man proclaim that his wheelbarrow is full of lobsters! Here comes another, mounted on a cart

and blowing a hoarse and dreadful blast from a tin horn, as much as to say, "Fresh fish!" And hark! a voice on high, like that of a muezzin from the summit of a mosque, announcing that some chimney-sweeper has emerged from smoke and soot and darksome caverns into the upper air. What cares the world for that? But, well-a-day, we hear a shrill voice of affliction—the scream of a little child, rising louder with every repetition of that smart, sharp, slapping sound produced by an open hand on tender flesh. Annie sympathizes, though without experience of such direful woe.

Lo! the town-crier again, with some new secret for the public ear. Will he tell us of an auction, or of a lost pocket-book or a show of beautiful wax figures, or of some monstrous beast more horrible than any in the caravan? I guess the latter. See how he uplifts the bell in his right hand and shakes it slowly at first, then with a hurried motion, till the clapper seems to strike both sides at once, and the sounds are scattered forth in quick succession far and near.

Ding-dong! Ding-dong! Ding-dong!

Now he raises his clear loud voice above all the din of the town. It drowns the buzzing talk of many tongues and draws each man's mind from his own business; it rolls up and down the echoing street, and ascends to the hushed chamber of the sick, and penetrates downward to the cellar kitchen where the hot cook turns from the fire to listen. Who of all that address the public ear, whether in church or court-house or hall of state, has such an attentive audience as the town-crier! What saith the people's orator?

"Strayed from her home, a LITTLE GIRL of five years old, in a blue silk frock and white pantalets, with brown curling hair and hazel eyes. Whoever will bring her back to her afflicted mother—"

Stop, stop, town-crier! The lost is found.—Oh, my pretty Annie, we forgot to tell your mother of our ramble, and she is in despair and has sent the town-crier to bellow up and down the streets, affrighting old and young, for the loss of a little girl who has not once let go my hand? Well, let us hasten homeward; and as we go forget not to thank Heaven, my Annie, that after wandering a little way into the world you may return at the first summons with an untainted and unwearied heart, and be a happy child again. But I have gone too far astray for the town-crier to call me back.

Sweet has been the charm of childhood on my spirit throughout my ramble with little Annie. Say not that it has been a waste of precious moments, an idle matter, a babble of childish talk and a reverie of childish imaginations about topics unworthy of a grown man's notice. Has it been merely this? Not so—not so. They are not truly wise who would affirm it. As the pure breath of children revives the life of aged men, so is our moral nature revived by their free and simple thoughts, their native feeling, their airy mirth for little cause or none, their grief soon roused and soon allayed. Their influence on us is at least reciprocal with ours on them. When our infancy is almost forgotten and our boyhood long departed, though it seems but as yesterday, when life settles darkly down upon us and we doubt whether to call ourselves young any more,—then it is good to steal away from the society of bearded men, and even of gentler woman, and spend an hour or two with children. After drinking from those fountains of still fresh existence we shall return into the crowd, as I do now, to struggle onward and do our part in life —perhaps as fervently as ever, but for a time with a kinder and purer heart and a spirit more lightly wise. All this by thy sweet magic, dear little Annie!

MS. FOUND IN A BOTTLE
Project Gutenberg's *The Works of Edgar Allan Poe, Vol I, Raven Edition*

Qui n'a plus qu'un moment a vivre

N'a plus rien a dissimuler.

--Quinault--Atys.

OF my country and of my family I have little to say. Ill usage and length of years have driven me from the one, and estranged me from the other. Hereditary wealth afforded me an education of no common order, and a contemplative turn of mind enabled me to methodize the stores which early study very diligently garnered up.--Beyond all things, the study of the German moralists gave me great delight; not from any ill-advised admiration of their eloquent madness, but from the ease with which my habits of rigid thought enabled me to detect their falsities. I have often been reproached with the aridity of my genius; a deficiency of imagination has been imputed to me as a crime; and the Pyrrhonism of my opinions has at all times rendered me notorious. Indeed, a strong relish for physical philosophy has, I fear, tinctured my mind with a very common error of this age--I mean the habit of referring occurrences, even the least susceptible of such reference, to the principles of that science. Upon the whole, no person could be less liable than myself to be led away from the severe precincts of truth by the ignes fatui of superstition. I have thought proper to premise thus much, lest the incredible tale I have to tell should be considered rather the raving of a crude imagination, than the positive experience of a mind to which the reveries of fancy have been a dead letter and a nullity.

After many years spent in foreign travel, I sailed in the year 18-- , from the port of Batavia, in the rich and populous island of Java, on a voyage to the Archipelago of the Sunda islands. I went as passenger--having no other inducement than a kind of nervous restlessness which haunted me as a fiend.

Our vessel was a beautiful ship of about four hundred tons, copper-fastened, and built at Bombay of Malabar teak. She was freighted with cotton-wool and oil, from the Lachadive islands. We had also on board coir, jaggeree, ghee, cocoa-nuts, and a few cases of opium. The stowage was clumsily done, and the vessel consequently crank.

We got under way with a mere breath of wind, and for many days stood along the eastern coast of Java, without any other incident to beguile the monotony of our course than the occasional meeting with some of the small grabs of the Archipelago to which we were bound.

One evening, leaning over the taffrail, I observed a very singular, isolated cloud, to the N.W. It was remarkable, as well for its color, as from its being the first we had seen since our departure from Batavia. I watched it attentively until sunset, when it spread all at once to the eastward and westward, girting in the horizon with a narrow strip of vapor, and looking like a long line of low beach. My notice was soon afterwards attracted by the dusky-red appearance of the moon, and the peculiar character of the sea. The latter was undergoing a rapid change, and the water seemed more than usually transparent. Although I could distinctly see the bottom, yet, heaving the lead, I found the ship in fifteen fathoms. The air now became intolerably hot, and was loaded with spiral exhalations similar to those arising from heat iron. As night came on, every breath of wind died away, an more entire calm it is impossible to conceive. The flame of a candle burned upon the poop without the least perceptible motion, and a long hair, held between the finger and thumb, hung without the possibility of detecting a vibration. However, as the captain said he could perceive no indication of danger, and as we were drifting in bodily to shore, he ordered the sails to be furled, and the anchor let go. No watch was set, and the crew, consisting principally of Malays, stretched themselves deliberately upon deck. I went below--not without a full presentiment of evil. Indeed, every appearance warranted me in apprehending a Simoom. I told the captain my fears; but he paid no attention to what I said, and left me without deigning to give a reply. My uneasiness, however, prevented me from sleeping, and about midnight I went upon deck.--As I placed my foot upon the upper step of the companion-ladder, I was startled by a loud, humming noise, like that occasioned by the rapid revolution of a mill-wheel, and before I could ascertain its meaning, I found the ship quivering to its centre. In the next instant, a wilderness of foam hurled us upon our beam-ends, and, rushing over us fore and aft, swept the entire decks from stem to stern.

The extreme fury of the blast proved, in a great measure, the salvation of the ship. Although completely water-logged, yet, as her masts had gone by the board, she rose, after a minute, heavily from the sea, and, staggering awhile beneath the immense pressure of the tempest, finally righted.

By what miracle I escaped destruction, it is impossible to say. Stunned by the shock of the water, I found myself, upon recovery, jammed in between the stern-post and rudder. With great difficulty I gained my feet, and looking dizzily around, was, at first, struck with the idea of our being among breakers; so terrific, beyond the wildest imagination, was the whirlpool of mountainous and foaming ocean within which we were engulfed. After a while, I heard the voice of an old Swede, who had shipped with us at the moment of our leaving port. I hallooed to him with all my strength, and presently he came reeling aft. We soon discovered that we were the sole survivors of the accident. All on deck,

with the exception of ourselves, had been swept overboard;--the captain and mates must have perished as they slept, for the cabins were deluged with water. Without assistance, we could expect to do little for the security of the ship, and our exertions were at first paralyzed by the momentary expectation of going down. Our cable had, of course, parted like pack-thread, at the first breath of the hurricane, or we should have been instantaneously overwhelmed. We scudded with frightful velocity before the sea, and the water made clear breaches over us. The frame-work of our stern was shattered excessively, and, in almost every respect, we had received considerable injury; but to our extreme Joy we found the pumps unchoked, and that we had made no great shifting of our ballast. The main fury of the blast had already blown over, and we apprehended little danger from the violence of the wind; but we looked forward to its total cessation with dismay; well believing, that, in our shattered condition, we should inevitably perish in the tremendous swell which would ensue. But this very just apprehension seemed by no means likely to be soon verified. For five entire days and nights--during which our only subsistence was a small quantity of jaggeree, procured with great difficulty from the forecastle--the hulk flew at a rate defying computation, before rapidly succeeding flaws of wind, which, without equalling the first violence of the Simoom, were still more terrific than any tempest I had before encountered. Our course for the first four days was, with trifling variations, S.E. and by S.; and we must have run down the coast of New Holland.--On the fifth day the cold became extreme, although the wind had hauled round a point more to the northward.--The sun arose with a sickly yellow lustre, and clambered a very few degrees above the horizon--emitting no decisive light.--There were no clouds apparent, yet the wind was upon the increase, and blew with a fitful and unsteady fury. About noon, as nearly as we could guess, our attention was again arrested by the appearance of the sun. It gave out no light, properly so called, but a dull and sullen glow without reflection, as if all its rays were polarized. Just before sinking within the turgid sea, its central fires suddenly went out, as if hurriedly extinguished by some unaccountable power. It was a dim, sliver-like rim, alone, as it rushed down the unfathomable ocean.

We waited in vain for the arrival of the sixth day--that day to me has not arrived--to the Swede, never did arrive. Thenceforward we were enshrouded in patchy darkness, so that we could not have seen an object at twenty paces from the ship. Eternal night continued to envelop us, all unrelieved by the phosphoric sea-brilliancy to which we had been accustomed in the tropics. We observed too, that, although the tempest continued to rage with unabated violence, there was no longer to be discovered the usual appearance of surf, or foam, which had hitherto attended us. All around were horror, and thick gloom, and a black sweltering desert of ebony.--Superstitious terror crept by degrees into the spirit of the old Swede, and my own soul was wrapped up in silent wonder. We neglected all care of the ship, as worse than useless, and securing ourselves, as well as possible, to the stump of the mizen-mast,

looked out bitterly into the world of ocean. We had no means of calculating time, nor could we form any guess of our situation. We were, however, well aware of having made farther to the southward than any previous navigators, and felt great amazement at not meeting with the usual impediments of ice. In the meantime every moment threatened to be our last--every mountainous billow hurried to overwhelm us. The swell surpassed anything I had imagined possible, and that we were not instantly buried is a miracle. My companion spoke of the lightness of our cargo, and reminded me of the excellent qualities of our ship; but I could not help feeling the utter hopelessness of hope itself, and prepared myself gloomily for that death which I thought nothing could defer beyond an hour, as, with every knot of way the ship made, the swelling of the black stupendous seas became more dismally appalling. At times we gasped for breath at an elevation beyond the albatross--at times became dizzy with the velocity of our descent into some watery hell, where the air grew stagnant, and no sound disturbed the slumbers of the kraken.

We were at the bottom of one of these abysses, when a quick scream from my companion broke fearfully upon the night. "See! see!" cried he, shrieking in my ears, "Almighty God! see! see!" As he spoke, I became aware of a dull, sullen glare of red light which streamed down the sides of the vast chasm where we lay, and threw a fitful brilliancy upon our deck. Casting my eyes upwards, I beheld a spectacle which froze the current of my blood. At a terrific height directly above us, and upon the very verge of the precipitous descent, hovered a gigantic ship of, perhaps, four thousand tons. Although upreared upon the summit of a wave more than a hundred times her own altitude, her apparent size exceeded that of any ship of the line or East Indiaman in existence. Her huge hull was of a deep dingy black, unrelieved by any of the customary carvings of a ship. A single row of brass cannon protruded from her open ports, and dashed from their polished surfaces the fires of innumerable battle-lanterns, which swung to and fro about her rigging. But what mainly inspired us with horror and astonishment, was that she bore up under a press of sail in the very teeth of that supernatural sea, and of that ungovernable hurricane. When we first discovered her, her bows were alone to be seen, as she rose slowly from the dim and horrible gulf beyond her. For a moment of intense terror she paused upon the giddy pinnacle, as if in contemplation of her own sublimity, then trembled and tottered, and--came down.

At this instant, I know not what sudden self-possession came over my spirit. Staggering as far aft as I could, I awaited fearlessly the ruin that was to overwhelm. Our own vessel was at length ceasing from her struggles, and sinking with her head to the sea. The shock of the descending mass struck her, consequently, in that portion of her frame which was already under water, and the inevitable result was to hurl me, with irresistible violence, upon the rigging of the stranger.

As I fell, the ship hove in stays, and went about; and to the confusion ensuing I attributed my escape from the notice of the crew. With little difficulty I made my way unperceived to the main hatchway, which was partially open, and soon found an opportunity of secreting myself in the hold. Why I did so I can hardly tell. An indefinite sense of awe, which at first sight of the navigators of the ship had taken hold of my mind, was perhaps the principle of my concealment. I was unwilling to trust myself with a race of people who had offered, to the cursory glance I had taken, so many points of vague novelty, doubt, and apprehension. I therefore thought proper to contrive a hiding-place in the hold. This I did by removing a small portion of the shifting-boards, in such a manner as to afford me a convenient retreat between the huge timbers of the ship.

I had scarcely completed my work, when a footstep in the hold forced me to make use of it. A man passed by my place of concealment with a feeble and unsteady gait. I could not see his face, but had an opportunity of observing his general appearance. There was about it an evidence of great age and infirmity. His knees tottered beneath a load of years, and his entire frame quivered under the burthen. He muttered to himself, in a low broken tone, some words of a language which I could not understand, and groped in a corner among a pile of singular-looking instruments, and decayed charts of navigation. His manner was a wild mixture of the peevishness of second childhood, and the solemn dignity of a God. He at length went on deck, and I saw him no more.

* * * * *

A feeling, for which I have no name, has taken possession of my soul --a sensation which will admit of no analysis, to which the lessons of bygone times are inadequate, and for which I fear futurity itself will offer me no key. To a mind constituted like my own, the latter consideration is an evil. I shall never--I know that I shall never--be satisfied with regard to the nature of my conceptions. Yet it is not wonderful that these conceptions are indefinite, since they have their origin in sources so utterly novel. A new sense--a new entity is added to my soul.

* * * * *

It is long since I first trod the deck of this terrible ship, and the rays of my destiny are, I think, gathering to a focus. Incomprehensible men! Wrapped up in meditations of a kind which I cannot divine, they pass me by unnoticed. Concealment is utter folly on my part, for the people will not see. It was but just now that I passed directly before the eyes of the mate--it was no long while ago that I ventured into the captain's own private cabin, and took thence the materials with which I write, and have written. I shall from time to time continue this Journal. It is true that I may not find an opportunity of transmitting

it to the world, but I will not fall to make the endeavour. At the last moment I will enclose the MS. in a bottle, and cast it within the sea.

* * * * *

An incident has occurred which has given me new room for meditation. Are such things the operation of ungoverned Chance? I had ventured upon deck and thrown myself down, without attracting any notice, among a pile of ratlin-stuff and old sails in the bottom of the yawl. While musing upon the singularity of my fate, I unwittingly daubed with a tar-brush the edges of a neatly-folded studding-sail which lay near me on a barrel. The studding-sail is now bent upon the ship, and the thoughtless touches of the brush are spread out into the word DISCOVERY.

I have made many observations lately upon the structure of the vessel. Although well armed, she is not, I think, a ship of war. Her rigging, build, and general equipment, all negative a supposition of this kind. What she is not, I can easily perceive--what she is I fear it is impossible to say. I know not how it is, but in scrutinizing her strange model and singular cast of spars, her huge size and overgrown suits of canvas, her severely simple bow and antiquated stern, there will occasionally flash across my mind a sensation of familiar things, and there is always mixed up with such indistinct shadows of recollection, an unaccountable memory of old foreign chronicles and ages long ago.

* * * * *

I have been looking at the timbers of the ship. She is built of a material to which I am a stranger. There is a peculiar character about the wood which strikes me as rendering it unfit for the purpose to which it has been applied. I mean its extreme porousness, considered independently by the worm-eaten condition which is a consequence of navigation in these seas, and apart from the rottenness attendant upon age. It will appear perhaps an observation somewhat over-curious, but this wood would have every characteristic of Spanish oak, if Spanish oak were distended by any unnatural means.

In reading the above sentence a curious apothegm of an old weather-beaten Dutch navigator comes full upon my recollection. "It is as sure," he was wont to say, when any doubt was entertained of his veracity, "as sure as there is a sea where the ship itself will grow in bulk like the living body of the seaman."

* * * * *

About an hour ago, I made bold to thrust myself among a group of the crew. They paid me no manner of attention, and, although I stood in the very midst of them all, seemed utterly unconscious of my presence. Like the one I had at first seen in the hold, they all bore about them the

marks of a hoary old age. Their knees trembled with infirmity; their shoulders were bent double with decrepitude; their shrivelled skins rattled in the wind; their voices were low, tremulous and broken; their eyes glistened with the rheum of years; and their gray hairs streamed terribly in the tempest. Around them, on every part of the deck, lay scattered mathematical instruments of the most quaint and obsolete construction.

* * * * *

I mentioned some time ago the bending of a studding-sail. From that period the ship, being thrown dead off the wind, has continued her terrific course due south, with every rag of canvas packed upon her, from her trucks to her lower studding-sail booms, and rolling every moment her top-gallant yard-arms into the most appalling hell of water which it can enter into the mind of a man to imagine. I have just left the deck, where I find it impossible to maintain a footing, although the crew seem to experience little inconvenience. It appears to me a miracle of miracles that our enormous bulk is not swallowed up at once and forever. We are surely doomed to hover continually upon the brink of Eternity, without taking a final plunge into the abyss. From billows a thousand times more stupendous than any I have ever seen, we glide away with the facility of the arrowy sea-gull; and the colossal waters rear their heads above us like demons of the deep, but like demons confined to simple threats and forbidden to destroy. I am led to attribute these frequent escapes to the only natural cause which can account for such effect.--I must suppose the ship to be within the influence of some strong current, or impetuous under-tow.

* * * * *

I have seen the captain face to face, and in his own cabin--but, as I expected, he paid me no attention. Although in his appearance there is, to a casual observer, nothing which might bespeak him more or less than man-still a feeling of irrepressible reverence and awe mingled with the sensation of wonder with which I regarded him. In stature he is nearly my own height; that is, about five feet eight inches. He is of a well-knit and compact frame of body, neither robust nor remarkably otherwise. But it is the singularity of the expression which reigns upon the face--it is the intense, the wonderful, the thrilling evidence of old age, so utter, so extreme, which excites within my spirit a sense--a sentiment ineffable. His forehead, although little wrinkled, seems to bear upon it the stamp of a myriad of years.--His gray hairs are records of the past, and his grayer eyes are Sybils of the future. The cabin floor was thickly strewn with strange, iron-clasped folios, and mouldering instruments of science, and obsolete long-forgotten charts. His head was bowed down upon his hands, and he pored, with a fiery unquiet eye, over a paper which I took to be a commission, and which, at all events, bore the signature of a monarch. He muttered to himself, as

did the first seaman whom I saw in the hold, some low peevish syllables of a foreign tongue, and although the speaker was close at my elbow, his voice seemed to reach my ears from the distance of a mile.

* * * * *

The ship and all in it are imbued with the spirit of Eld. The crew glide to and fro like the ghosts of buried centuries; their eyes have an eager and uneasy meaning; and when their fingers fall athwart my path in the wild glare of the battle-lanterns, I feel as I have never felt before, although I have been all my life a dealer in antiquities, and have imbibed the shadows of fallen columns at Balbec, and Tadmor, and Persepolis, until my very soul has become a ruin.

* * * * *

When I look around me I feel ashamed of my former apprehensions. If I trembled at the blast which has hitherto attended us, shall I not stand aghast at a warring of wind and ocean, to convey any idea of which the words tornado and simoom are trivial and ineffective? All in the immediate vicinity of the ship is the blackness of eternal night, and a chaos of foamless water; but, about a league on either side of us, may be seen, indistinctly and at intervals, stupendous ramparts of ice, towering away into the desolate sky, and looking like the walls of the universe.

* * * * *

As I imagined, the ship proves to be in a current; if that appellation can properly be given to a tide which, howling and shrieking by the white ice, thunders on to the southward with a velocity like the headlong dashing of a cataract.

* * * * *

To conceive the horror of my sensations is, I presume, utterly impossible; yet a curiosity to penetrate the mysteries of these awful regions, predominates even over my despair, and will reconcile me to the most hideous aspect of death. It is evident that we are hurrying onwards to some exciting knowledge--some never-to-be-imparted secret, whose attainment is destruction. Perhaps this current leads us to the southern pole itself. It must be confessed that a supposition apparently so wild has every probability in its favor.

* * * * *

The crew pace the deck with unquiet and tremulous step; but there is upon their countenances an expression more of the eagerness of hope than of the apathy of despair.

In the meantime the wind is still in our poop, and, as we carry a crowd of canvas, the ship is at times lifted bodily from out the sea--Oh, horror upon horror! the ice opens suddenly to the right, and to the left, and we are whirling dizzily, in immense concentric circles, round and round the borders of a gigantic amphitheatre, the summit of whose walls is lost in the darkness and the distance. But little time will be left me to ponder upon my destiny--the circles rapidly grow small--we are plunging madly within the grasp of the whirlpool--and amid a roaring, and bellowing, and thundering of ocean and of tempest, the ship is quivering, oh God! and--going down.

NOTE.--The "MS. Found in a Bottle," was originally published in 1831, and it was not until many years afterwards that I became acquainted with the maps of Mercator, in which the ocean is represented as rushing, by four mouths, into the (northern) Polar Gulf, to be absorbed into the bowels of the earth; the Pole itself being represented by a black rock, towering to a prodigious height.

THE CHAMPION CHECKER-PLAYER OF AMERIKY

by James Whitcomb Riley

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Of course as fur as Checker-playin's concerned, you can't jest adzackly claim 'at lots makes fortunes and lots gits bu'sted at it--but still, it's on'y simple jestice to acknowledge 'at there're absolute p'ints in the game 'at takes scientific principles to figger out, and a mighty level-headed feller to _dim_onstrate, don't you understand!

Checkers is a' _old_ enough game, ef age is any rickommendation; and it's a' evident fact, too, 'at "the tooth of time," as the feller says, which fer the last six thousand years has gained some reputation fer a-eatin' up things in giner'l, don't 'pear to 'a' gnawed much of a hole in Checkers--jedgin' from the checker-board of to-day and the ones 'at they're uccasionally shovellin' out at _Pom_p'y-_i_, er whatever its name is. Turned up a checker-board there not long ago, I wuz readin' 'bout, 'at still had the spots on--as plain and fresh as the modern white-pine board o' our'n, squared off with pencil-marks and pokeberry-juice. These is facts 'at history herself has dug out, and of course it ain't fer me ner you to turn our nose up at Checkers, whuther we ever tamper with the fool-game er not. Fur's that's concerned, I don't p'tend to be no checker-player _myse'f_,--but I know'd a feller onc't 'at _could_ play, and sorto' made a business of it; and _that_ man, in my opinion, was a geenyus! Name wuz Wesley Cotterl--John Wesley Cotterl--jest plain Wes, as us fellers round the Shoe-Shop ust to call him; ust to allus make the Shoe-Shop his headquarters-like; and, rain

er shine, wet er dry, you'd allus find _Wes_ on hands, ready to banter some feller fer a game, er jest a-settin' humped up there over the checker-board all alone, a-cipher'n' out some new move er 'nuther, and whistlin' low and solem' to hisse'f-like and a-payin' no attention to nobody.

And _I'll_ tell _you_, Wes Cotterl wuz no man's fool, as sly as you keep it! He wuz a deep thinker, Wes wuz; and ef he'd 'a' jest turned that mind o' his loose on _preachin'_, fer instunce, and the 'terpertation o' the Bible, don't you know, Wes 'ud 'a' worked p'ints out o' there 'at no livin' expounderers ever got in gunshot of!

But Wes he didn't 'pear to be cut out fer nothin' much but jest Checker-playin'. Oh, of course, he _could_ knock round his own woodpile some, and garden a little, more er less; and the neighbers ust to find Wes purty handy 'bout trimmin' fruit-trees, you understand, and workin' in among the worms and cattapillers in the vines and shrubbery, and the like. And handlin' bees!--They wuzn't no man under the heavens 'at knowed more 'bout handlin' bees'n Wes Cotterl!--"Settlin'" the blame' things when they wuz a-swarmin'; and a-robbin' hives, and all sich fool-resks. W'y, I've saw Wes Cotterl, 'fore now, when a swarm of bees 'ud settle in a' orchard,--like they will sometimes, you know,--I've saw Wes Cotterl jest roll up his shirt-sleeves and bend down a' apple tree limb 'at wuz jest kivvered with the pesky things, and scrape 'em back into the hive with his naked hands, by the quart and gallon, and never git a scratch! You couldn't _hire_ a bee to sting Wes Cotterl! But _lazy_?--I think that man had railly ort to 'a' been a' Injun! He wuz the fust and on'y man 'at ever I laid eyes on 'at wuz too lazy to drap a checker-man to p'int out the right road fer a feller 'at ast him onc't the way to Burke's Mill; and Wes, 'ithout ever a-liftin' eye er finger, jest sorto' crooked out that mouth o' his'n in the direction the feller wanted, and says: "_H-yonder!_" and went on with his whistlin'. But all this hain't Checkers, and that's what I started out to tell ye.

Wes had a way o' jest natchurly a-cleanin' out anybody and ever'body 'at 'ud he'p hold up a checker-board! Wes wuzn't what you'd call a _lively_ player at all, ner a competiter 'at talked much 'crost the board er made much furse over a game whilse he _wuz_ a-playin'. He had his faults, o' course, and _would_ take back moves 'casion'ly, er inch up on you ef you didn't watch him, mebby. But, _as a rule_, Wes had the insight to grasp the idy of whoever wuz a-playin' ag'in' him, and _his_ style o' game, you understand, and wuz on the lookout continual'; and under sich circumstances _could_ play as _honest_ a game o' Checkers as the babe unborn.

One thing in _Wes's_ favor allus wuz the feller's temper.--Nothin' 'peared to aggervate Wes, and nothin' on earth could break his slow and lazy way o' takin' his own time fer ever'thing. You jest _couldn't crowd Wes_ er git him rattled anyway.--Jest 'peared to have one fixed

principle, and that wuz to take plenty o' time, and never make no move 'ithout a-ciphern'n' ahead on the prob'ble consequences, don't you understand! "Be shore you're right," Wes 'ud say, a-lettin' up fer a second on that low and sorry-like little wind-through-the-keyhole whistle o' his, and a-nosin' out a place whur he could swap one man fer two.--"Be shore you're right"--and somep'n' after this style wuz Wes's way: "Be shore you're right"--(whistling a long, lonesome bar of "Barbara Allen")--"and then"--(another long, retarded bar)--"go ahead!"--and by the time the feller 'ud git through with his whistlin', and a-stoppin' and a-startin' in ag'in, he'd be about three men ahead to your one. And then he'd jest go on with his whistlin' 'sef nothin' had happened, and mebby you a-jest a-rearin' and a-callin' him all the mean, outlandish, ornry names 'at you could lay tongue to.

But Wes's good nature, I reckon, was the thing 'at he'ped him out as much as any other p'ints the feller had. And _Wes 'ud allus win, in the long run_!--I don't keer _who_ played ag'inst him! It was on'y a question o' time with Wes o' waxin' it to the best of 'em. Lots o' players has _tackled_ Wes, and right at the _start_ 'ud mebby give him trouble,--but in the _long run_, now mind ye--_in the long run_, no mortal man, I reckon, had any business o' rubbin' knees with Wes Cotterl under no airthly checker-board in all this vale o' tears!

I mind onc't th' come along a high-toned feller from in around In'i'nop'lus somers.--Wuz a _lawyer_, er some _p'fessional_ kind o' man. Had a big yaller, luther-kivvered book under his arm, and a bunch o' these-'ere big en_vel_op's and a lot o' suppeenies stickin' out o' his breastpocket. Mighty slick-lookin' feller he wuz; wore a stovepipe hat, sorto' set 'way back on his head--so's to show off his Giner'l Jackson forr'ed, don't you know! Well-sir, this feller struck the place, on some business er other, and then missed the hack 'at _ort_ to 'a' tuk him out o' here sooner'n it _did_ take him out!--And whilse he wuz a-loafin' round, sorto' lonesome--like a feller allus _is_ in a strange place, you know--he kindo' drapped in on our crowd at the Shoe-Shop, ostenchably to git a boot-strop stitched on, but _I_ knowed, the minute he set foot in the door, 'at _that_ feller wanted _comp'ny_ wuss'n _cobblin'_.

Well, as good luck would have it, there set Wes, as usual, with the checker-board in his lap, a-playin' all by hisse'f, and a-whistlin' so low and solem'-like and sad it railly made the crowd seem like a _religious_ getherun' o' some kind er other, we wuz all so quiet and still-like, as the man come in.

Well, the stranger stated his business, set down, tuk off his boot, and set there nussin' his foot and talkin' weather fer ten minutes, I reckon, 'fore he ever 'peared to notice Wes at all. We wuz all back'ard, anyhow, 'bout talkin' much; besides, we knowed, long afore he come in, all about how hot the weather wuz, and the pore chance there wuz o' rain, and all that; and so the subject had purty well died out, when

jest then the feller's eyes struck Wes and the checker-board,--and I'll never fergit the warm, salvation smile 'at flashed over him at the promisin' discovery. "_What!_" says he, a-grinnin' like a' angel and a-edgin' his cheer to'rds Wes, "have we a checker-board and checkers here?"

"We hev," says I, knowin' 'at Wes wouldn't let go o' that whistle long enough to answer--more'n to mebby nod his head.

"And who is your best player?" says the feller, kindo' pitiful-like, with another inquirin' look at Wes.

"Him," says I, a-pokin' Wes with a peg-float. But Wes on'y spit kindo' absent-like, and went on with his whistlin'.

"Much of a player, is he?" says the feller, with a sorto' doubtful smile at Wes ag'in.

"Plays a purty good hick'ry," says I, a-pokin' Wes ag'in. "Wes," says I, "here's a gentleman 'at 'ud mebby like to take a hand with you there, and give you a few idys," says I.

"Yes," says the stranger, eager-like, a-settin' his plug-hat keerful' up in the empty shelvin', and a-rubbin' his hands and smilin' as confident-like as old Hoyle hisse'f,--"Yes, indeed, I'd be glad to give the gentleman" (meanin' Wes) "a' idy er two about Checkers--ef _he'd_ jest as lief,--'cause I reckon ef there're any one thing 'at I _do_ know more about 'an another, it's Checkers," says he; "and there're no game 'at delights me more--_pervidin'_, o' course, I find a competiter 'at kin make it anyways inte_rest_in'."

"Got much of a rickord on Checkers?" says I.

"Well," says the feller, "I don't like to brag, but I've never _ben_ beat--in any _legitimut_ contest," says he, "and I've played more'n one o' _them_," he says, "here and there round the country. Of course, _your friend_ here," he went on, smilin' sociable at Wes, "_he'll_ take it all in good part ef I should happen to lead him a little--jest as _I'd_ do," he says, "ef it wuz possible fer him to lead _me_."

"_Wes_," says I, "_has_ warmed the wax in the yeers of some mighty good checker-players," says I, as he squared the board around, still a-whistlin' to hisse'f-like, as the stranger tuk his place, a-smilin'-like and roachin' back his hair.

"Move," says Wes.

"No," says the feller, with a polite flourish of his hand; "the first move shall be your'n." And, by jucks! fer all he wouldn't take even the

advantage of a starter, he flaxed it to Wes the fust game in less'n fifteen minutes.

"Right shore you've give' me your best player?" he says, smilin' round at the crowd, as Wes set squarin' the board fer another game and whistlin' as onconcerned-like as ef nothin' had happened more'n ordinary.

"'S your move," says Wes, a-squintin' out into the game 'bout forty foot from shore, and a-whistlin' purt' nigh in a whisper.

Well-sir, it 'peared-like the feller railly didn't _try_ to play; and you could see, too, 'at Wes knowed he'd about met his match, and played accordin'. He didn't make no move at all 'at he didn't give keerful thought to; whilse the feller--! well, as I wuz sayin', it jest 'peared-like _Checkers_ wuz _child's-play_ fer him! Putt in most o' the time 'long through the game a-sayin' things calkilated to kindo' bore a' ordinary man. But Wes helt hisse'f purty level, and didn't show no signs, and kep' up his _whistlin'_, mighty well--considerin'.

"Reckon you play the _fiddle_, too, as well as _Checkers_?" says the feller, laughin', as Wes come a-whistlin' out of the little end of the second game and went on a-fixin' fer the next round.

"'S my move!" says Wes, 'thout seemin' to notice the feller's tantalizin' words whatsomever.

"'L! _this_ time," thinks I, "Mr. Smarty from the _me_trolopin deestricts, _you're_ liable to git _waxed_--_shore_!" But the _feller_ didn't 'pear to think so at all, and played right ahead as glib-like and keerless as ever--'casion'ly a-throwin' in them sircastic remarks o' his'n,--'bout bein' "slow and shore" 'bout things in gineral--"Liked to _see_ that," he said:--"Liked to see fellers do things with plenty o' _deliberation_, and even ef a feller _wuzn't_ much of a checker-player, liked to see him _die_ slow _anyhow_!--and then 'tend his own funeral," he says,--"and march in the p'session--to his own _music_," says he.--And jest then his remarks wuz brung to a close by Wes a-jumpin' two men, and a-lightin' square in the king-row.... "Crown that," says Wes, a-droppin' back into his old tune. And fer the rest o' _that_ game Wes helt the feller purty level, but had to finally knock under--but by jest the clos'test kind o' shave o' winnin'.

"They ain't much use," says the feller, "o' keepin' _this_ thing up--'less I could manage, _some_ way er other, to git beat _onc't 'n a while_!"

"Move," says Wes, a-drappin' back into the same old whistle and a-_settlin'_ there.

"'Music has charms,' as the Good Book tells us," says the feller, kindo' nervous-like, and a-roachin' his hair back as ef some sort o' p'tracted headache wuz a-settin' in.

"Never wuz '_skunked_,' wuz ye?" says Wes, kindo' suddent-like, with a fur-off look in them big white eyes o' his--and then a-whistlin' right on 'sef he hadn't said _nothin'_.

"_Not much!_" says the feller, sorto' s'prised-like, as ef such a' idy as that had never struck him afore.--"Never was 'skunked' _myse'f_: but I've saw fellers in my time 'at _wuz_!" says he.

But from that time on I noticed the feller 'peared to play more keerful, and railly la'nched into the game with somepin' like inter'st. Wes he seemed to be jest a-limber-in'-up-like; and-sir, blame me! ef he didn't walk the feller's log fer him _that_ time, 'thout no 'pearent trouble at all!

"And, _now_," says Wes, all quiet-like, a-squarin' the board fer another'n,--"we're kindo' gittin' at things _right_. Move." And away went that little unconcerned whistle o' his ag'in, and _Mr. Cityman_ jest gittin' white and sweaty too--he wuz so nervous. Ner he didn't 'pear to find much to laugh at in the _next_ game--ner the next _two_ games nuther! Things wuz a-gettin' mighty inte_rest_in' 'bout them times, and I guess the feller wuz ser'ous-like a-wakin' up to the solem' fact 'at it tuk 'bout all _his_ spare time to keep up his end o' the row, and even that state o' pore satisfaction wuz a-creepin' furder and furder away from him ever' new turn he undertook. Whilse _Wes_ jest peared to git more deliber't' and certain ever' game; and that unendin' se'f-satisfied and comfortin' little whistle o' his never drapped a stitch, but toed out ever' game alike,--to'rds the _last_, and, fer the _most_ part, disasterss to the feller 'at had started in with sich confi_dence_ and actchul promise, don't you know.

Well-sir, the feller stuck the whole _forenoon_ out, and then the _afternoon_; and then knuckled down to it 'way into the night--yes, and plum _midnight_!--And he buckled into the thing bright and airly _next morning_! And-sir, fer _two long days_ and nights, a-hardly a-stoppin' long enough to _eat_, the feller stuck it out,--and Wes a-jest a-warpin' it to him hand-over-fist, and leavin' him furder behind, ever' game!--till finally, to'rds the last, the feller got so blamedon worked up and excited-like, he jes' 'peared actchully purt' nigh plum crazy and histurical as a woman!

It was a-gittin' late into the shank of the second day, and the boys hed jest lit a candle fer 'em to finish out one of the clost'est games the feller'd played Wes fer some time. But Wes wuz jest as cool and ca'm as ever, and still a-whistlin' consolin' to hisse'f-like, whilse the feller jest 'peared wore out and ready to drap right in his tracks any minute.

"_Durn you!_" he snarled out at Wes, "hain't you never goern to move?" And there set Wes, a-balancin' a checker-man above the board, a-studyin' whur to set it, and a-fillin' in the time with that-air whistle.

"_Flames and flashes!_" says the feller ag'in, "will you _ever_ stop that death-seducin' tune o' your'n long enough to move?"--And as Wes deliber't'ly set his man down whur the feller see he'd haf to jump it and lose two men and a king, Wes wuz a-singin', low and sad-like, as ef all to hisse'f:

"O we'll move that man, and leave him there.--
Fer the love of B-a-r-b--bry Al-len!"

Well-sir! the feller jest jumped to his feet, upset the board, and tore out o' the shop stark-starin' crazy--blame ef he wuzn't!--'cause some of us putt out after him and overtook him 'way beyent the 'pike-bridge, and hollered to him;--and he shuk his fist at us and hollered back and says, says he: "Ef you fellers over here," says he, "'ll agree to _muzzle_ that durn checker-player o' your'n, I'll bet fifteen hunderd dollars to fifteen cents 'at I kin beat him 'leven games out of ever' dozent!--But there're _no money_," he says, "'at kin hire me to play him ag'in, on this aboundin' airth, on'y on them conditions--'cause that durn, eternal, infernal, dad-blasted whistle o' his 'ud beat the oldest man in Ameriky!"

AUNT DINAH'S KITCHEN
BY Harriet Beecher Stowe
ibid (Vol II)

Like a certain class of modern philosophers, Dinah perfectly scorned logic and reason in every shape, and always took refuge in intuitive certainty; and here she was perfectly impregnable. No possible amount of talent, or authority, or explanation could ever make her believe that any other way was better than her own, or that the course she had pursued in the smallest matter could be in the least modified. This had been a conceded point with her old mistress, Marie's mother; and "Miss Marie," as Dinah always called her young mistress, even after her marriage, found it easier to submit than contend; and so Dinah had ruled supreme. This was the easier, in that she was perfect mistress of that diplomatic art which unites the utmost subservience of manner with the utmost inflexibility as to measure.

Dinah was the mistress of the whole art and mystery of excuse-making, in all its branches. Indeed, it was an axiom with her that the cook can do no wrong, and a cook in a Southern kitchen finds abundance of heads and shoulders on which to lay off every sin and frailty, so as to maintain

her own immaculateness entire. If any part of the dinner was a failure, there were fifty indisputably good reasons for it, and it was the fault, undeniably, of fifty other people, whom Dinah berated with unsparing zeal.

But it was very seldom that there was any failure in Dinah's last results. Though her mode of doing everything was peculiarly meandering and circuitous, and without any sort of calculation as to time and place,--though her kitchen generally looked as if it had been arranged by a hurricane blowing through it, and she had about as many places for each cooking utensil as there were days in the year,--yet, if one could have patience to wait her own good time, up would come her dinner in perfect order, and in a style of preparation with which an epicure could find no fault.

It was now the season of incipient preparation for dinner. Dinah, who required large intervals of reflection and repose, and was studious of ease in all her arrangements, was seated on the kitchen floor, smoking a short, stumpy pipe, to which she was much addicted, and which she always kindled up, as a sort of censer, whenever she felt the need of an inspiration in her arrangements. It was Dinah's mode of invoking the domestic Muses.

Seated around her were various members of that rising race with which a Southern household abounds, engaged in shelling peas, peeling potatoes, picking pin-feathers out of fowls, and other preparatory arrangements, Dinah every once in a while interrupting her meditations to give a poke, or a rap on the head, to some of the young operators, with the pudding-stick that lay by her side. In fact, Dinah ruled over the woolly heads of the younger members with a rod of iron, and seemed to consider them born for no earthly purpose but to "save her steps," as she phrased it. It was the spirit of the system under which she had grown up, and she carried it out to its full extent.

Miss Ophelia, after passing on her reformatory tour through all the other parts of the establishment, now entered the kitchen. Dinah had heard, from various sources, what was going on, and resolved to stand on defensive and conservative ground,--mentally determined to oppose and ignore every new measure, without any actual and observable contest.

The kitchen was a large, brick-floored apartment, with a great old-fashioned fireplace stretching along one side of it,--an arrangement which St. Clair had vainly tried to persuade Dinah to exchange for the convenience of a modern cook-stove. Not she. No Pusseyite, or conservative of any school, was ever more inflexibly attached to time-honored inconveniences than Dinah.

When St. Clair had first returned from the North, impressed with the system and order of his uncle's kitchen arrangements, he had largely

provided his own with an array of cupboards, drawers, and various apparatus, to induce systematic regulation, under the sanguine illusion that it would be of any possible assistance to Dinah in her arrangements. He might as well have provided them for a squirrel or a magpie. The more drawers and closets there were, the more hiding-holes could Dinah make for the accommodation of old rags, hair-combs, old shoes, ribbons, cast-off artificial flowers, and other articles of _vertu_, wherein her soul delighted.

When Miss Ophelia entered the kitchen, Dinah did not rise, but smoked on in sublime tranquillity, regarding her movements obliquely out of the corner of her eye, but apparently intent only on the operations around her.

Miss Ophelia commenced opening a set of drawers.

"What is this drawer for, Dinah?" she said.

"It's handy for 'most anything, missis," said Dinah. So it appeared to be. From the variety it contained Miss Ophelia pulled out first a fine damask table-cloth stained with blood, having evidently been used to envelop some raw meat.

"What's this, Dinah? You don't wrap up meat in your mistress's best table-cloth?"

"Oh, Lor', missis, no; the towels was all a-missin', so I just did it. I laid it out to wash that ar; that's why I put it thar."

"Shir'less!" said Miss Ophelia to herself, proceeding to tumble over the drawer, where she found a nutmeg-grater and two or three nutmegs, a Methodist hymn-book, a couple of soiled Madras handkerchiefs, some yarn and knitting-work, a paper of tobacco and a pipe, a few crackers, one or two gilded china saucers with some pomade in them, one or two thin old shoes, a piece of flannel carefully pinned up enclosing some small white onions, several damask table-napkins, some coarse crash towels, some twine and darning-needles, and several broken papers, from which sundry sweet herbs were sifting into the drawer.

"Where do you keep your nutmegs, Dinah?" said Miss Ophelia, with the air of one who "prayed for patience."

"Most anywhar, missis; there's some in that cracked tea-cup up there, and there's some over in that ar cupboard."

"Here are some in the grater," said Miss Ophelia, holding them up.

"Laws, yes; I put 'em there this morning; I likes to keep my things handy," said Dinah. "You Jake! what are you stopping for? You'll cotch

it! Be still, thar!" she added, with a dive of her stick at the criminal.

"What's this?" said Miss Ophelia, holding up the saucer of pomade.

"Laws, it's my _har-grease_: I put it thar to have it handy."

"Do you use your mistress's best saucers for that?"

"Law! it was 'cause I was driv' and in sich a hurry. I was gwine to change it this very day."

"Here are two damask table-napkins."

"Them table-napkins I put thar to get 'em washed out some day."

"Don't you have some place here on purpose for things to be washed?"

"Well, Mas'r St. Clair got dat ar chest, he said, for dat; but I likes to mix up biscuit and hev my things on it some days, and then it ain't handy a-liftin' up the lid."

"Why don't you mix your biscuits on the pastry-table, there?"

"Law, missis, it gets sot so full of dishes, and one thing and another, der ain't no room, noways."

"But you should wash your dishes, and clear them away."

"Wash my dishes!" said Dinah, in a high key, as her wrath began to rise over her habitual respect of manner. "What does ladies know 'bout work, I want to know? When'd mas'r ever get his dinner, if I was to spend all my time a-washin' and a-puttin' up dishes? Miss Marie never telled me so, nohow."

"Well, here are these onions."

"Laws, yes!" said Dinah; "that _is_ whar I put 'em, now. I couldn't 'member. Them's particular onions I was a savin' for dis yer very stew. I'd forgot they was in dat ar old flannel."

Miss Ophelia lifted out the sifting papers of sweet herbs. "I wish missis wouldn't touch dem ar. I likes to keep my things where I knows whar to go to 'em," said Dinah, rather decidedly.

"But you don't want these holes in the papers."

"Them's handy for siftin' on't out," said Dinah.

"But you see it spills all over the drawer."

"Laws, yes! if missis will go a-tumblin' things all up so, it will. Missis has spilt lots dat ar way," said Dinah, coming uneasily to the drawers. "If missis only will go up-sta'rs till my clarin'-up time comes, I'll have everything right; but I can't do nothin' when ladies is 'round a-henderin'. You Sam, don't you gib de baby dat ar sugar-bowl! I'll crack ye over, if ye don't mind!"

"I'm going through the kitchen, and going to put everything in order, _once_, Dinah; and then I'll expect you to _keep_ it so."

"Lor', now, Miss 'Phelia, dat ar ain't no way for ladies to do. I never did see ladies doin' no sich; my old missis nor Miss Marie never did, and I don't see no kinder need on't." And Dinah stalked indignantly about, while Miss Ophelia piled and sorted dishes, emptied dozens of scattering bowls of sugar into one receptacle, sorted napkins, table-cloths, and towels, for washing; washing, wiping and arranging with her own hands, and with a speed and alacrity which perfectly amazed Dinah.

"Lor', now! if dat ar de way dem Northern ladies do, dey ain't ladies nohow," she said to some of her satellites, when at a safe hearing-distance. "I has things as straight as anybody, when my clarin'-up times comes; but I don't want ladies 'round a-henderin' and gettin' my things all where I can't find 'em."

To do Dinah justice, she had, at irregular periods, paroxysms of reformation and arrangement, which she called "clarin'-up times," when she would begin with great zeal and turn every drawer and closet wrong side outward on to the floor or tables, and make the ordinary confusion sevenfold more confounded. Then she would light her pipe and leisurely go over her arrangements, looking things over and discoursing upon them; making all the young fry scour most vigorously on the tin things, and keeping up for several hours a most energetic state of confusion, which she would explain to the satisfaction of all inquirers by the remark that she was a "clarin'-up." "She couldn't hev things a-gwine on so as they had been, and she was gwine to make these yer young ones keep better order;" for Dinah herself, somehow, indulged the illusion that she herself was the soul of order, and it was only the _young uns_, and the everybody else in the house, that were the cause of anything that fell short of perfection in this respect. When all the tins were scoured, and the tables scrubbed snowy white, and everything that could offend tucked out of sight in holes and corners, Dinah would dress herself up in a smart dress, clean apron, and high, brilliant Madras turban, and tell all marauding "young uns" to keep out of the kitchen, for she was gwine to have things kept nice. Indeed, these periodic seasons were often an inconvenience to the whole household, for Dinah would contract such an immoderate attachment to her scoured tin as to

insist upon it that it shouldn't be used again for any possible purpose,--at least till the ardor of the "clarin'-up" period abated.

BALACCHI BROTHERS.
by Rebecca Harding Davis
Project Gutenberg's *Stories by American Authors, Volume 1,* by Various

"There's a man, now, that has been famous in his time," said Davidge, as we passed the mill, glancing in at the sunny gap in the side of the building.

I paused incredulously: Phil's lion so often turned out to be Snug the joiner. Phil was my chum at college, and in inviting me home to spend the vacation with him I thought he had fancied the resources of his village larger than they proved. In the two days since we came we had examined the old doctor's cabinet, listened superciliously to a debate in the literary club upon the Evils of the Stage, and passed two solid afternoons in the circle about the stove in the drug-shop, where the squire and the Methodist parson, and even the mild, white-cravated young rector of St. Mark's, were wont to sharpen their wits by friction. What more was left? I was positive that I knew the mental gauge of every man in the village.

A little earlier or later in life a gun or fishing-rod would have satisfied me. The sleepy, sunny little market-town was shut in by the bronzed autumn meadows, that sent their long groping fingers of grass or parti-colored weeds drowsily up into the very streets: there were ranges of hills and heavy stretches of oak and beech woods, too, through which crept glittering creeks full of trout. But I was just at that age when the soul disdains all aimless pleasures: my game was Man. I was busy in philosophically testing, weighing, labelling human nature.

"Famous, eh?" I said, looking after the pursy figure of the miller in his floury canvas round-about and corduroy trowsers, trotting up and down among the bags.

"That is one of the Balacchi Brothers," Phil answered as we walked on. "You've heard of them when you were a boy?"

I had heard of them. The great acrobats were as noted in their line of art as Ellsler and Jenny Lind in theirs. But acrobats and danseuses had been alike brilliant, wicked impossibilities to my youth, for I had been reared a Covenanter of the Covenanters. In spite of the doubting philosophies with which I had clothed myself at college, that old Presbyterian training clung to me in everyday life close as my skin.

After that day I loitered about the mill, watching this man, whose life had been spent in one godless theatre after another, very much as the Florentine peasants looked after Dante when they knew he had come back from hell. I was on the lookout for the taint, the abnormal signs, of vice. It was about that time that I was fevered with the missionary enthusiasm, and in Polynesia, where I meant to go (but where I never did go), I declared to Phil daily that I should find in every cannibal the half-effaced image of God, only waiting to be quickened into grace and virtue. That was quite conceivable. But that a flashy, God-defying actor could be the same man at heart as this fat, good-tempered, gossiping miller, who jogged to the butcher's every morning for his wife, a basket on one arm and a baby on the other, was not conceivable. He was a close dealer at the butcher's, too, though dribbling gossip there as everywhere; a regular attendant at St. Mark's, with his sandy-headed flock about him, among whom he slept comfortably enough, it is true, but with as pious dispositions as the rest of us.

I remember how I watched this man, week in and week out. It was a trivial matter, but it irritated me unendurably to find that this circus-rider had human blood precisely like my own it outraged my early religion.

We talk a great deal of the rose-colored illusions in which youth wraps the world, and the agony it suffers as they are stripped from its bare, hard face. But the fact is, that youth (aside from its narrow-passionate friendships) is usually apt to be acrid and watery and sour in its judgment and creeds--it has the quality of any other unripe fruit: it is middle age that is just and tolerant, that has found room enough in the world for itself and all human flies to buzz out their lives good-humoredly together. It is youth who can see a tangible devil at work in every party or sect opposed to its own, whose enemy is always a villain, and who finds treachery and falsehood in the friend who is occasionally bored or indifferent: it is middle age that has discovered the reasonable sweet _juste milieu_ of human nature--who knows few saints perhaps, but is apt to find its friend and grocer and shoemaker agreeable and honest fellows. It is these vehement illusions, these inherited bigotries and prejudices, that tear and cripple a young man as they are taken from him one by one. He creeps out of them as a crab from the shell that has grown too small for him, but he thinks he has left his identity behind him.

It was such a reason as this that made me follow the miller assiduously, and cultivate a quasi intimacy with him, in the course of which I picked the following story from him. It was told at divers times, and with many interruptions and questions from me. But for obvious reasons I have made it continuous. It had its meaning to me, coarse and common though it was--the same which Christ taught in the divine beauty of His parables. Whether that meaning might not be found in the history of every human life, if we had eyes to read it, is matter for question.

Balacchi Brothers? And you've heard of them, eh? Well, well! (with a pleased nod, rubbing his hands on his knees). Yes, sir. Fifteen years ago they were known as The Admirable Crichtons of the Ring. It was George who got up that name: I did not see the force of it. But no name could claim too much for us. Why, I could show you notices in the newspapers that--I used to clip them out and stuff my pocket-book with them as we went along, but after I quit the business I pasted them in an old ledger, and I often now read them of nights. No doubt I lost a good many, too.

Yes, sir: I was one of Balacchi Brothers. My name _is_ Zack Loper. And it was then, of course.

You think we would have plenty of adventures? Well, no--not a great many. There's a good deal of monotony in the business. Towns seem always pretty much alike to me. And there was such a deal of rehearsing to be done by day and at night. I looked at nothing but the rope and George: the audience was nothing but a packed flat surface of upturned, staring eyes and half-open mouths. It was an odd sight, yes, when you come to think of it. I never was one for adventures. I was mostly set upon shaving close through the week, so that when Saturday night came I'd have something to lay by: I had this mill in my mind, you see. I was married, and had my wife and a baby that I'd never seen waiting for me at home. I was brought up to milling, but the trapeze paid better. I took to it naturally, as one might say.

But George!--he had adventures every week. And as for acquaintances! Why, before we'd be in a town two days he'd be hail-fellow-well-met with half the people in it. That fellow could scent a dance or a joke half a mile off. You never see such wide-awake men nowadays. People seem to me half dead or asleep when I think of him.

Oh, I thought you knew. My partner Balacchi. It was Balacchi on the bill: the actors called him Signor, and people like the manager, South, and we, who knew him well, George. I asked him his real name once or twice, but he joked it off. "How many names must a man be saddled with?" he said. I don't know it to this day, nor who he had been. They hinted there was something queer about his story, but I'll go my bail it was a clean one, whatever it was.

You never heard how "Balacchi Brothers" broke up? That was as near to an adventure as I ever had. Come over to this bench and I'll tell it to you. You don't dislike the dust of the mill? The sun's pleasanter on this side.

It was early in August of '56 when George and I came to an old town on the Ohio, half city, half village, to play an engagement. We were under contract with South then, who provided the rest of the troupe, three or

four posture-girls, Stradi the pianist, and a Madame Somebody, who gave readings and sang. "Concert" was the heading in large caps on the bills, "Balacchi Brothers will give their aesthetic _tableaux vivants_ in the interludes," in agate below.

"I've got to cover you fellows over with respectability here," South said. "Rope-dancing won't go down with these aristocratic church-goers."

I remember how George was irritated. "When I was my own agent," he said, "I only went to the cities. Educated people can appreciate what we do, but in these country towns we rank with circus-riders."

George had some queer notions about his business. He followed it for sheer love of it, as I did for money. I've seen all the great athletes since, but I never saw one with his wonderful skill and strength, and with the grace of a woman too, or a deer. Now that takes hard, steady work, but he never flinched from it, as I did; and when night came, and the people and lights, and I thought of nothing but to get through, I used to think he had the pride of a thousand women in every one of his muscles and nerves: a little applause would fill him with a mad kind of fury of delight and triumph. South had a story that George belonged to some old Knickerbocker family, and had run off from home years ago. I don't know. There was that wild restless blood in him that no home could have kept him.

We were to stay so long in this town that I found rooms for us with an old couple named Peters, who had but lately moved in from the country, and had half a dozen carpenters and masons boarding with them. It was cheaper than the hotel, and George preferred that kind of people to educated men, which made me doubt that story of his having been a gentleman. The old woman Peters was uneasy about taking us, and spoke out quite freely about it when we called, not knowing that George and I were Balacchi Brothers ourselves.

"The house has been respectable so far, gentlemen," she said. "I don't know what about taking in them half-naked, drunken play-actors. What do you say, Susy?" to her granddaughter.

"Wait till you see them, grandmother," the girl said gently. "I should think that men whose lives depended every night on their steady eyes and nerves would not dare to touch liquor."

"You are quite right--nor even tobacco," said George. It was such a prompt, sensible thing for the little girl to say that he looked at her attentively a minute, and then went up to the old lady smiling: "We don't look like drinking men, do we, madam?"

"No, no, sir. I did not know that you were the I-talians." She was quite flustered and frightened, and said cordially enough how glad she was to

have us both. But it was George she shook hands with. There was something clean and strong and inspiring about that man that made most women friendly to him on sight.

Why, in two days you'd have thought he'd never had another home than the Peters's. He helped the old man milk, and had tinkered up the broken kitchen-table, and put in half a dozen window-panes, and was intimate with all the boarders; could give the masons the prices of job-work at the East, and put Stoll the carpenter on the idea of contract houses, out of which he afterward made a fortune. It was nothing but jokes and fun and shouts of laughter when he was in the house: even the old man brightened up and told some capital stories. But from the first I noticed that George's eye followed Susy watchfully wherever she went, though he was as distant and respectful with her as he was with most women. He had a curious kind of respect for women, George had. Even the Slingsbys, that all the men in the theatre joked with, he used to pass by as though they were logs leaning against the wall. They were the posture-girls, and anything worse besides the name _I_ never saw.

There was a thing happened once on that point which I often thought might have given me a clew to his history if I'd followed it up. We were playing in one of the best theatres in New York (they brought us into some opera), and the boxes were filled with fine ladies beautifully dressed, or, I might say, half dressed.

George was in one of the wings. "It's a pretty sight," I said to him.

"It's a shameful sight," he said with an oath. "The Slingsbys do it for their living, but these women--"

I said they were ladies, and ought to be treated with respect. I was amazed at the heat he was in.

"I had a sister, Zack, and there's where I learned what a woman should be."

"I never heard of your sister, George," said I. I knew he would not have spoken of her but for the heat he was in.

"No. I'm as dead to her, being what I am, as if I were six feet under ground."

I turned and looked at him, and when I saw his face I said no more, and I never spoke of it again. It was something neither I nor any other man had any business with.

So, when I saw how he was touched by Susy and drawn toward her, it raised her in my opinion, though I'd seen myself how pretty and sensible a little body she was. But I was sorry, for I knew twan't no use. The

Peterses were Methodists, and Susy more strict than any of them; and I saw she looked on the theatre as the gate of hell, and George and me swinging over it.

I don't think, though, that George saw how strong her feeling about it was, for after we'd been there a week or two he began to ask her to go and see us perform, if only for once. I believe he thought the girl would come to love him if she saw him at his best. I don't wonder at it, sir. I've seen those pictures and statues they've made of the old gods, and I reckon they put in them the best they thought a man could be; but I never knew what real manhood was until I saw my partner when he stood quiet on the stage waiting the signal to begin the light full on his keen blue eyes, the gold-worked velvet tunic, and his perfect figure.

He looked more like other men in his ordinary clothing. George liked a bit of flash, too, in his dress--a red necktie or gold chain stretched over his waistcoat.

Susy refused at first, steadily. At last, however, came our final night, when George was to produce his great leaping feat, never yet performed in public. We had been practising it for months, and South judged it best to try it first before a small, quiet audience, for the risk was horrible. Whether, because it was to be the last night, and her kind heart disliked to hurt him by refusal, or whether she loved him better than either she or he knew, I could not tell, but I saw she was strongly tempted to go. She was an innocent little thing, and not used to hide what she felt. Her eyes were red that morning, as though she had been crying all the night. Perhaps, because I was a married man, and quieter than George, she acted more freely with me than him.

"I wish I knew what to do," she said, looking up to me with her eyes full of tears. There was nobody in the room but her grandmother.

"I couldn't advise you, Miss Susy," says I. "Your church discipline goes against our trade, I know."

"I know what's right myself: I don't need church discipline to teach me," she said sharply.

"I think I'd go, Susy," said her grandmother. "It is a concert, after all: it's not a play."

"The name doesn't alter it."

Seeing the temper she was in, I thought it best to say no more, but the old lady added, "It's Mr. George's last night. Dear, dear! how I'll miss him!"

Susy turned quickly to the window. "Why does he follow such godless ways

then?" she cried. She stood still a good while, and when she turned about her pale little face made my heart ache. "I'll take home Mrs. Tyson's dress now, grandmother," she said, and went out of the room. I forgot to tell you Susy was a seamstress. Well, the bundle was large, and I offered to carry it for her, as the time for rehearsal did not come till noon. She crept alongside of me without a word, looking weak and done-out: she was always so busy and bright, it was the more noticeable. The house where the dress was to go was one of the largest in the town. The servant showed us into a back parlor, and took the dress up to her mistress. I looked around me a great deal, for I'd never been in such a house before; but very soon I caught sight of a lady who made me forget carpets and pictures. I only saw her in the mirror, for she was standing by the fireplace in the front room. The door was open between. It wasn't that she was especially pretty, but in her white morning-dress, with lace about her throat and her fair hair drawn back from her face, I thought she was the delicatest, softest, finest thing of man- or woman-kind I ever say.

"Look there, Susy! look there!" I whispered.

"It is a Mrs. Lloyd from New York. She is here on a visit. That is her husband;" and then she went down into her own gloomy thoughts again.

The husband was a grave, middle-aged man. He had had his paper up before his face, so that I had not seen him before.

"You will go for the tickets, then, Edward?" she said.

"If you make a point of it, yes," in an annoyed tone. "But I don't know why you make a point of it. The musical part of the performance is beneath contempt, I understand, and the real attraction is the exhibition of these mountebanks of trapezists, which will be simply disgusting to you. You would not encourage such people at home: why would you do it here?"

"They are not necessarily wicked." I noticed there was a curious unsteadiness in her voice, as though she was hurt and agitated. I thought perhaps she knew I was there.

"There is very little hope of any redeeming qualities in men who make a trade of twisting their bodies like apes," he said. "Contortionists and ballet-dancers and clowns and harlequins--" he rattled all the names over with a good deal of uncalled-for sharpness, I thought, calling them "dissolute and degraded, the very offal of humanity." I could not understand his heat until he added, "I never could comprehend your interest and sympathy for that especial class, Ellinor."

"No, you could not, Edward," she said quietly.

"But I have it. I never have seen an exhibition of the kind. But I want to see this to-night, if you will gratify me. I have no reason." she added when he looked at her curiously. "The desire is unaccountable to myself."

The straightforward look of her blue eyes as she met his seemed strangely familiar and friendly to me.

At that moment Susy stood up to go. Her cheeks were burning and her eyes sparkling. "Dissolute and degraded!" she said again and again when we were outside. But I took no notice.

As we reached the house she stopped me when I turned off to go to rehearsal. "You'll get seats for grandmother and me, Mr. Balacchi?" she said.

"You're going, then, Susy?"

"Yes, I'm going."

* * * * *

Now the house in which we performed was a queer structure. A stock company, thinking there was a field for a theatre in the town, had taken a four-story building, gutted the interior, and fitted it up with tiers of seats and scenery. The stock company was starved out, however, and left the town, and the theatre was used as a gymnasium, a concert-room, or a church by turns. Its peculiarity was, that it was both exceedingly lofty and narrow, which suited our purpose exactly.

It was packed that night from dome to pit. George and I had rehearsed our new act both morning and afternoon, South watching us without intermission. South was terribly nervous and anxious, half disposed, at the last minute, to forbid it, although it had been announced on the bills for a week. But a feat which is successful in an empty house, with but one spectator, when your nerves are quiet and blood cool, is a different thing before an excited, terrified, noisy audience, your whole body at fever heat. However, George was cool as a cucumber, indeed almost indifferent about the act, but in a mad, boyish glee all day about everything else. I suppose the reason was that Susy was going.

South had lighted the house brilliantly and brought in a band. And all classes of people poured into the theatre until it could hold no more. I saw Mrs. Peters in one of the side-seats, with Susy's blushing, frightened little face beside her. George, standing back among the scenes, saw her too: I think, indeed, it was all he did see.

There were the usual readings from Shakespeare at first.

While Madame was on, South came to us. "Boys," said he, "let this matter go over a few weeks. A little more practice will do you no harm. You can substitute some other trick, and these people will be none the wiser."

George shrugged his shoulders impatiently: "Nonsense! When did you grow so chicken-hearted, South? It is I who have to run the risk, I fancy."

I suppose South's uneasiness had infected me.

"I am quite willing to put it off," I said. I had felt gloomy and superstitious all day. But I never ventured to oppose George more decidedly than that.

He only laughed by way of reply, and went off to dress. South looked after him, I remember, saying what a magnificently-built fellow he was. If we could only have seen the end of that night's work!

As I went to my dressing-room I saw Mrs. Lloyd and her husband in one of the stage-boxes, with one or two other ladies and gentlemen. She was plainly and darkly dressed, but to my mind she looked like a princess among them all. I could not but wonder what interest she could have in such a rough set as we, although her husband, I confess, did judge us hardly.

After the readings came the concert part of the performance, and then what South chose to call the Moving Tableaux, which was really nothing in the world but ballet-dancing. George and I were left to crown the whole. I had some ordinary trapeze-work to do at first, but George was reserved for the new feat, in order that his nerves might be perfectly unshaken. When I went out alone and bowed to the audience, I observed that Mrs. Lloyd was leaning eagerly forward, but at the first glance at my face she sank back with a look of relief, and turned away, that she might not see my exploits. It nettled me a little, I think, yet they were worth watching.

Well, I finished, and then there was a song to give me time to cool. I went to the side-scenes where I could be alone, for that five minutes. I had no risk to run in the grand feat, you see, but I had George's life in my hands. I haven't told you yet--have I?--what it was he proposed to do.

A rope was suspended from the centre of the dome, the lower end of which I held, standing in the highest gallery opposite the stage. Above the stage hung the trapeze on which George and the two posture-girls were to be. At a certain signal I was to let the rope go, and George, springing from the trapeze across the full width of the dome, was to catch it in mid-air, a hundred feet above the heads of the people. You understand? The mistake of an instant of time on either his part or mine, and death was almost certain. The plan we had thought surest was for South to give

the word, and then that both should count--One, Two, Three! At Three the rope fell, and he leaped. We had practised so often that we thought we counted as one man.

When the song was over the men hung the rope and the trapeze. Jenny and Lou Slingsby swung themselves up to it, turned a few somersaults and then were quiet. They were only meant to give effect to the scene in their gauzy dresses and spangles. Then South came forward and told the audience what we meant to do. It was a feat, he said, which had never been produced before in any theatre, and in which failure was death. No one but that most daring of all acrobats, Balacchi, would attempt it. Now I knew South so well that I saw under all his confident, bragging tone he was more anxious and doubtful than he had ever been. He hesitated a moment, and then requested that after we took our places the audience should preserve absolute silence, and refrain from even the slightest movement until the feat was over. The merest trifle might distract the attention of the performers and render their eyes and hold unsteady, he said. He left the stage, and the music began.

I went round to take my place in the gallery. George had not yet left his room. As I passed I tapped at the door and called, "Good luck, old fellow!"

"That's certain now, Zack," he answered, with a joyous laugh. He was so exultant, you see, that Susy had come.

But the shadow of death seemed to have crept over me. When I took my stand in the lofty gallery, and looked down at the brilliant lights and the great mass of people, who followed my every motion as one man, and the two glittering, half-naked girls swinging in the distance, and heard the music rolling up thunders of sound, it was all ghastly and horrible to me, sir. Some men have such presentiments, they say: I never had before or since. South remained on the stage perfectly motionless, in order, I think, to maintain his control over the audience.

The trumpets sounded a call, and in the middle of a burst of triumphant music George came on the stage. There was a deafening outbreak of applause and then a dead silence, but I think every man and woman felt a thrill of admiration of the noble figure Poor George! the new, tight-fitting dress of purple velvet that he had bought for this night set off his white skin, and his fine head was bare, with no covering but the short curls that Susy liked.

It was for Susy! He gave one quick glance up at her, and a bright, boyish smile, as if telling her not to be afraid, which all the audience understood, and answered by an involuntary, long-drawn breath. I looked at Susy. The girl's colorless face was turned to George, and her hands were clasped as though she saw him already dead before her; but she could be trusted, I saw. _She_ would utter no sound. I had only time to

glance at her, and then turned to my work. George and I dared not take our eyes from each other.

There was a single bugle note, and then George swung himself up to the trapeze. The silence was like death as he steadied himself and slowly turned so as to front me. As he turned he faced the stage-box for the first time. He had reached the level of the posture-girls, who fluttered on either side, and stood on the swaying rod poised on one foot, his arms folded, when in the breathless stillness there came a sudden cry and the words, "Oh, Charley! Charley!"

Even at the distance where I stood I saw George start and a shiver pass over his body. He looked wildly about him.

"To me! to me!" I shouted.

He fixed his eye on mine and steadied himself. There was a terrible silent excitement in the people, in the very air.

There was the mistake. We should have stopped then, shaken as he was, but South, bewildered and terrified, lost control of himself: he gave the word.

I held the rope loose--held George with my eyes--One!

I saw his lips move: he was counting with me.

Two!

His eye wandered, turned to the stage-box.

Three!

Like a flash, I saw the white upturned faces below me, the posture-girls' gestures of horror, the dark springing figure through the air, that wavered--and fell a shapeless mass on the floor.

There was a moment of deathlike silence, and then a wild outcry--women fainting, men cursing and crying out in that senseless, helpless way they have when there is sudden danger. By the time I had reached the floor they had straightened out his shattered limbs, and two or three doctors were fighting their way through the great crowd that was surging about him.

Well, sir, at that minute what did I hear but George's voice above all the rest, choked and hollow as it was, like a man calling out of the grave: "The women! Good God! don't you see the women?" he gasped.

Looking up then, I saw those miserable Slingsbys hanging on to the

trapeze for life. What with the scare and shock, they'd lost what little sense they had, and there they hung helpless as limp rags high over our heads.

"Damn the Slingsbys!" said I. God forgive me! But I saw this battered wreck at my feet that had been George. Nobody seemed to have any mind left. Even South stared stupidly up at them and then back at George. The doctors were making ready to lift him, and half of the crowd were gaping in horror, and the rest yelling for ladders or ropes, and scrambling over each other, and there hung the poor flimsy wretches, their eyes starting out of their heads from horror, and their lean fingers loosing their hold every minute. But, sir--I couldn't help it--I turned from them to watch George as the doctors lifted him.

"It's hardly worth while," whispered one.

But they raised him and, sir--the body went one way and the legs another.

I thought he was dead. I couldn't see that he breathed, when he opened his eyes and looked up for the Slingsbys. "Put me down," he said, and the doctors obeyed him. There was that in his voice that they had to obey him, though it wasn't but a whisper.

"Ladders are of no use," he said. "Loper!"

"Yes, George"

"You can swing yourself up. Do it."

I went. I remember the queer stunned feeling I had: my joints moved like a machine.

When I had reached the trapeze, he said, as cool as if he were calling the figures for a Virginia reel, "Support them, you--Loper. Now, lower the trapeze, men--carefully!"

It was the only way their lives could be saved, and he was the only man to see it. He watched us until the girls touched the floor more dead than alive, and then his head fell back and the life seemed to go suddenly out of him like the flame out of a candle, leaving only the dead wick.

As they were carrying him out I noticed for the first time that a woman was holding his hand. It was that frail little wisp of a Susy, that used to blush and tremble if you spoke to her suddenly, and here she was quite quiet and steady in the midst of this great crowd.

"His sister, I suppose" one of the doctors said to her.

"No, sir. If he lives I will be his wife." The old gentleman was very respectful to her after that, I noticed.

Now, the rest of my story is very muddled, you'll say, and confused. But the truth is, I don't understand it myself. I ran on ahead to Mrs. Peters's to prepare his bed for him, but they did not bring him to Peters's. After I waited an hour or two I found George had been taken to the principal hotel in the place, and a bedroom and every comfort that money could buy were there for him. Susy came home sobbing late in the night, but she told me nothing, except that those who had a right to have charge of him had taken him. I found afterward the poor girl was driven from the door of his room, where she was waiting like a faithful dog. I went myself, but I fared no better. What with surgeons and professional nurses, and the gentlemen that crowded about with their solemn looks of authority, I dared not ask to see him. Yet I believe still George would rather have had old Loper by him in his extremity than any of them. Once, when the door was opened, I thought I saw Mrs. Lloyd stooping over the bed between the lace curtains, and just then her husband came out talking to one of the surgeons.

He said: "It is certain there were here the finest elements of manhood. And I will do my part to rescue him from the abyss into which he has fallen."

"Will you tell me how George is, sir?" I asked, pushing up. "Balacchi? My partner?"

Mr. Lloyd turned away directly, but the surgeon told me civilly enough that if George's life could be saved, it must be with the loss of one or perhaps both of his legs.

"He'll never mount a trapeze again, then," I said, and I suppose I groaned; for to think of George helpless--

"God forbid!" cried Mr. Lloyd, sharply. "Now look here, my good man: you can be of no possible use to Mr.--Balacchi as you call him. He is in the hands of his own people, and he will feel, as they do, that the kindest thing you can do is to let him alone."

There was nothing to be done after that but to touch my hat and go out, but as I went I heard him talking of "inexplicable madness and years of wasted opportunities."

Well, sir, I never went again: the words hurt like the cut of a whip, though 'twan't George that spoke them. But I quit business, and hung around the town till I heard he was going to live, and I broke up my contract with South. I never went on a trapeze again. I felt as if the infernal thing was always dripping with his blood after that day.

Anyhow, all the heart went out of the business for me with George. So I came back here and settled down to the milling, and by degrees I learned to think of George as a rich and fortunate man.

I've nearly done now--only a word or two more. About six years afterward there was a circus came to town, and I took the wife and children and went. I always did when I had the chance. It was the old Adam in me yet, likely.

Well, sir, among the attractions of the circus was the great and unrivalled Hercules, who could play with cannon-balls as other men would with dice. I don't know what made me restless and excited when I read about this man. It seemed as though the old spirit was coming back to me again. I could hardly keep still when the time drew near for him to appear. I don't know what I expected, but when he came out from behind the curtain I shouted out like a madman, "Balacchi! George! George!"

He stopped short, looked about, and catching sight of me tossed up his cap with his old boyish shout; then he remembered himself and went on with his performance.

He was lame--yes, in one leg. The other was gone altogether. He walked on crutches. Whether the strength had gone into his chest and arms, I don't know; but there he stood tossing about the cannon-balls as I might marbles. So full of hearty good-humor too, joking with his audience, and so delighted when they gave him a round of applause.

After the performance I hurried around the tent, and you may be sure there was rejoicing that made the manager and other fellows laugh.

George haled me off with him down the street. He cleared the ground with that crutch and wooden leg like a steam-engine. "Come! come along!" he cried; "I've something to show you, Loper."

He took me to a quiet boarding-house, and there, in a cosey room, was Susy with a four-year-old girl.

"We were married as soon as I could hobble about," he said, "and she goes with me and makes a home wherever I am."

Susy nodded and blushed and laughed. "Baby and I," she said. "Do you see Baby? She has her father's eyes, do you see?"

"She _is_ her mother, Loper," said George--"just as innocent and pure and foolish--just as sure of the Father in heaven taking care of her. They've made a different man of me in some ways--a different man," bending his head reverently.

After a while I began, "You did not stay with--?" But Balacchi

frowned. "I knew where _I_ belonged," he said.

Well, he's young yet. He's the best Hercules in the profession, and has laid up a snug sum. Why doesn't he invest it and retire? I doubt if he'll ever do that, sir. He may do it, but I doubt it. He can't change his blood, and there's that in Balacchi that makes me suspect he will die with the velvet and gilt on, and in the height of good-humor and fun with his audience.

AN INCIDENT

by Sarah Barnwell Elliott
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It was an ordinary frame house standing on brick legs, and situated on a barren knoll, which, because of the dead level of marsh and swamp and deserted fields from which it rose, seemed to achieve the loneliness of a real height. The south and west sides of the house looked out on marsh and swamp; the north and east sides on a wide stretch of old fields grown up in broom-grass. Beyond the marsh rolled a river, now quite beyond its banks with a freshet; beyond the swamp, which was a cypress swamp, rose a railway embankment leading to a bridge that crossed the river. On the other two sides the old fields ended in a solid black wall of pine-barren. A roadway led from the house through the broom-grass to the barren, and at the beginning of this road stood an outhouse, also on brick legs, which, save for a small stable, was the sole out-building. One end of this house was a kitchen, the other was divided into two rooms for servants. There were some shattered remnants of oak-trees out in the field, and some chimneys overgrown with vines, showing where in happier times the real homestead had stood.

It was toward the end of February; a clear afternoon drawing toward sunset; and all the flat, sad country was covered with a drifting red glow that turned the field of broom-grass into a sea of gold; that lighted up the black wall of pine-barren, and shot, here and there, long shafts of light into the sombre depths of the cypress swamp. There was no sign of life about the dwelling-house, though the doors and windows stood open; but every now and then a negro woman came out of the kitchen and looked about, while within a dog whined.

Shading her eyes with her hand, this woman would gaze across the field toward the ruin; then down the road; then, descending the steps, she would walk a little way toward the swamp and look along the dam that, ending the yard on this side, led out between the marsh and the swamp to the river. The over-full river had backed up into the yard, however, and the line of the dam could now only be guessed at by the wall of solemn cypress-trees

that edged the swamp. Still, the woman looked in this direction many times and also toward the railway embankment, from which a path led toward the house, crossing the heap of the swamp by a bridge made of two felled trees.

But look as she would, she evidently did not find what she sought, and muttering "Lawd! Lawd!" she returned to the kitchen, shook the tied dog into silence, and seating herself near the fire, gazed sombrely into its depths. A covered pot hung from the crane over the blaze, making a thick bubbling noise, as if what it contained had boiled itself almost dry, and a coffee-pot on the hearth gave forth a pleasant smell. The woman from time to time turned the spit of a tin kitchen wherein a fowl was roasting, and moved about the coals on the top of a Dutch oven at one side. She had made preparation for a comfortable supper, and evidently for others than herself.

She went again to the open door and looked about, the dog springing up and following to the end of his cord. The sun was nearer the horizon now, and the red glow was brighter. She looked toward the ruin; looked along the road; came down the steps and looked toward the swamp and the railway path. This time she took a few steps in the direction of the house; looked up at its open windows, at the front door standing ajar, at a pair of gloves and a branch from the vine at the ruin, that lay on the top step of the piazza, as if in passing one had put them there, intending to return in a moment. While she looked the distant whistle of a locomotive was heard echoing back and forth about the empty land, and the rumble of an approaching train. She turned a little to listen, then went hurriedly back to the kitchen.

The rumbling sound increased, although the speed was lessened as the river was neared. Very slowly the train was moving, and the woman, peeping from the window, watched a gentleman get off and begin the descent of the path.

"Mass Johnnie!" she said. "Lawd! Lawd!" and again seated herself by the fire until the rapid, firm footstep having passed, she went to the door, and standing well in the shadow, watched.

Up the steps the gentleman ran, pausing to pick up the gloves and the bit of vine. The negro groaned. Then in the open door, "Nellie!" he called, "Nellie!"

The woman heard the call, and going back quickly to her seat by the fire, threw her apron over her head.

"Abram!" was the next call; then, "Aggie!"

She sat quite still, and the master, running up the kitchen steps and coming in at the door, found her so.

"Aggie!"

"Yes, suh."

"Why didn't you answer me?"

The veiled figure rocked a little from side to side.

"What the mischief is the matter?" walking up to the woman and pulling the apron from over her face. "Where is your Miss Nellie?"

"I dun'no', suh; but yo' supper is ready, Mass Johnnie."

"Has your mistress driven anywhere?"

"De horse is in de stable, suh." The woman now rose as if to meet a climax, but her eyes were still on the fire.

"Did she go out walking?"

"Dis mawnin', suh."

"This morning!" he repeated, slowly, wonderingly, "and has not come back yet?"

The woman began to tremble, and her eyes, shining and terrified, glanced furtively at her master.

"Where is Abram?"

"I dun'no', suh!" It was a gasping whisper.

The master gripped her shoulder, and with a maddened roar he cried her name --"Aggie!"

The woman sank down. Perhaps his grasp forced her down. "'Fo' Gawd!" she cried--"'fo Gawd, Mass Johnnie, I dun'no'!" holding up beseeching hands between herself and the awful glare of his eyes. "I'll tell you, suh, Mass Johnnie, I'll tell you!" crouching away from him. "Miss Nellie gimme out dinner en supper, den she put on she hat en gone to de ole chimbly en git some de brier what grow dey. Den she come back en tell Abram fuh git a bresh broom en sweep de ya'd. Lemme go, Mass Johnnie, please, suh, en I tell you better, suh. En Abram teck de hatchet en gone to'des de railroad fuh cut de bresh. 'Fo' Gawd, Mass Johnnie, it's de trute, suh! Den I tell Miss Nellie say de chicken is all git out de coop, en she say I muss ketch one fuh unner supper, suh; en I teck de dawg en gone in de fiel' fuh look fuh de chicken. En I see Miss Nellie put 'e glub en de brier on de step, en walk to'des de swamp, like 'e was goin' on de dam--'kase de water ent rise ober de dam den--en den I gone in de broom-grass en I run de chicken, en I ent ketch one tay I git clean ober to de woods. En when I come back de glub is layin' on de step, en de brier, des like Miss Nellie leff um--" She

stopped, and her master straightened himself.

"Well," he said, and his voice was strained and weak.

The servant once more flung her apron over her head, and broke into violent crying. "Dat's all, Mass Johnnie! dat's all! I dun'no' wey Abram is gone; I dun'no' what Abram is do! Nobody ent been on de place dis day--dis day but me--but me! Oh, Lawd! oh, Lawd en Gawd!"

The master stood as if dazed. His face was drawn and gray, and his breath came in awful gasps. A moment he stood so, then he strode out of the house. With a howl the dog sprang forward, snapping the cord, and rushed after his master.

The woman's cries ceased, and without moving from her crouching position she listened with straining ears to the sounds that reached her from the stable. In a moment the clatter of horses' hoofs going at a furious pace swept by, then a dead silence fell. The intense quiet seemed to rouse her, and going to the door, she looked out. The glow had faded, and the gray mist was gathering in distinct strata above the marsh and the river. She went out and looked about her as she had done so many times during that long day. She gazed at the water that was still rising; she peered cautiously behind the stable and under the houses; she approached the wood-pile as if under protest, gathered some logs into her arms and an axe that was lying there; then turning toward the kitchen, she hastened her steps, looking back over her shoulder now and again, as if fearing pursuit. Once in the kitchen she threw down the wood and barred the door; she shut the boarded window-shutter, fastening it with an iron hook; then leaning the axe against the chimney, she sat down by the fire, muttering, "If dat nigger come sneakin' back yer now, I'll split 'e haid open, _sho_."

Recovering a little from her panic, she was once more a cook, and swung the crane from over the fire, brushed the coals from the top of the Dutch oven, and pushed the tin kitchen farther from the blaze. "Mass Johnnie'll want sump'h'n to eat some time dis night," she said; then, after a pause, "en I gwine eat _now_." She got a plate and cup, and helped herself to hominy out of the pot, and to a roll out of the oven; but though she looked at the fowl she did not touch it, helping herself instead to a goodly cup of coffee. So she ate and drank with the axe close beside her, now and then pausing to groan and mutter--"Po' Mass Johnnie!--po' Mass Johnnie!--Lawd! Lawd!--if Miss Nellie had er sen' Abram atter dat chicken--like I tell um--Lawd!" shaking her head the while.

Through the gathering dusk John Morris galloped at the top speed of his horse. Reaching the little railway station, he sprang off, throwing the reins over a post, and strode in.

"Write this telegram for me, Green," he said; "my hand trembles.

"_To Sam Partin, Sheriff, Pineville:_

"My wife missing since morning. Negro, Abram Washington, disappeared. Bring men and dogs. Get off night train this side of bridge. Will be fire on the path to mark the place.

"JOHN MORRIS."

"Great God!" the operator said, in a low voice. "I'll come too, Mr. Morris."

"Thank you," John Morris answered. "I'm going to get the Wilson boys, and Rountree and Mitchell," and for the first time the men's eyes met. Determined, deadly, sombre, was the look exchanged; then Morris went away.

None of the men whom Morris summoned said much, nor did they take long to arm themselves, saddle, and mount, and by nine o'clock Aggie heard them come galloping across the field; then her master's voice calling her. There was little time in which to make the signal-fire on the railroad embankment, and to cut light-wood into torches, even though there were many hands to do the work. John Morris's dog followed him a part of the way to the wood-pile, then turned aside to where the water had crept up from the swamp into the yard. Aggie saw the dog, and spoke to Mr. Morris.

"Dat's de way dat dawg do dis mawnin', Mass Johnnie, an' when I gone to ketch de chicken, Miss Nellie was walkin' to'des dat berry place."

An irresistible shudder went over John Morris, and one of the gentlemen standing near asked if he had a boat.

"The bateau was tied to that stake this morning," Mr. Morris answered, pointing to a stake some distance out in the water; "but I have another boat in the top of the stable." Every man turned to go for it, showing the direction of their fears, and launched it where the log bridge crossed the head of the swamp, and where now the water was quite deep.

The whistle was heard at the station, and the rumble of the on-coming train. The fire flared high, lighting up the group of men standing about it, booted and belted with ammunition-belts, quiet, and white, and determined.

Many curious heads looked out as the sheriff and his men--six men besides Green from the station--got off; then the train rumbled away in the darkness toward the surging, turbulent river, and the crowd moved toward the house.

Mr. Morris told of his absence in town on business. That Abram had been hired first as a field-hand; and that later, after his marriage, he had taken Abram from the field to look after his horse and to do the heavier

work about the house and yard.

"And the woman Aggie is trust-worthy?"

"I am sure of it; she used to belong to us."

"Abram is a strange negro?"

"Yes."

Then Aggie was called in to tell her story. Abram had taken the hatchet and had gone toward the railroad for brush to make a broom. She had taken the dog and gone into the broom-grass to catch a fowl, and the last she had seen of her mistress she was walking toward the dam, which was then above the water.

"How long were you gone after the chicken?"

"I dun'no', suh; but I run um clean to de woods 'fo' I ketch um, en I walk back slow 'kase I tired."

"Were you gone an hour?"

"I spec so, suh, 'kase when I done ketch de chicken I stop fuh pick up some light-wood I see wey Abram been cuttin' wood yistiddy."

"And your mistress was not here when you came back--nor Abram?"

"No, suh, nobody; en 'e wuz so lonesome I come en look in dis house fuh Miss Nellie, but 'e ent deyyer; en I look in de bush fuh Abram, but I ent see um nudder. En de dawg run to de water en howl en ba'k en ba'k tay I tie um up in de kitchen."

"And was the boat tied to the stake this morning?"

"Yes, suh; en when I been home long time en git scare, den I look en see de boat gone."

"You don't think that your mistress got in the boat and drifted away by accident?"

"No, suh, nebber, suh; Miss Nellie 'fraid de water lessen Mass Johnnie is wid um."

"Is Abram a good boy?"

"I dun'no', suh; I dun'no' nuffin 'tall 'bout Abram, suh; Abram is strange nigger to we."

"Did he take his things out of his room?"

"Abram t'ings? Ki! Abram ent hab nuttin' ceppen what Miss Nellie en Mass Johnnie gi' um. No, suh, dat nigger ent hab nuttin' but de close on 'e back when 'e come to we."

The sheriff paused a moment. "I think, Mr. Morris," he said at last, "that we'd better separate. You, with Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Rountree, had better take your boat and hunt in the swamp and marsh, and along the river-bank. Let Mr. Wilson, his brothers, and Green take your dog and search in the pine-barren. I'll take my men and my dogs and cross the railroad. The signal of any discovery will be three shots fired in quick succession. The gathering-place'll be this house, where a member of the discovering party'll meet the other parties and bring 'em to the discovery. And I beg that you'll refrain from violence, at least until we can reach each other. We've no proof of anything--"

"Damn proof!"

"An' our only clew," the sheriff went on, "the missing boat, points to Mrs. Morris's safety." A little consultation ensued; then agreeing to the sheriff's distribution of forces, they left the house.

The sheriff's dogs--the lean, small hounds used on such occasions--were tied, and he held the ropes. There was an anxious look on his face, and he kept his dogs near the house until the party for the barren had mounted and ridden away, and the party in the boat had pushed off into the blackness of the swamp, a torch fastened at the prow casting weird, uncertain shadows. Then ordering his six men to mount and to lead his horse, he went to the room of the negro Abram and got an old shirt. The two lean little dogs were restless, but they made no sound as he led them across the railway. Once on the other side, he let them smell the shirt, and loosed them, and was about to mount, when, in the flash of a torch, he saw something in the grass.

"A hatchet!" he said to his companions, picking it up; "and clean, thank God!"

The men looked at each other, then one said, slowly, "He coulder drowned her?"

The sheriff did not answer, but followed the dogs that had trotted away with their noses to the ground.

"I'm sure the nigger came this way," the sheriff said, after a while. "Those others may find the poor young lady, but I feel sure of the nigger."

One of the men stopped short. "That nigger's got to die," he said.

"Of course," the sheriff answered, "but not by Judge Lynch's court. This

circuit's got a judge that'll hang him lawfully."

"I b'lieve Judge More will," the recalcitrant admitted, and rode on. "But," he added, "if I know Mr. John Morris, that nigger's safe to die one way or another."

They rode more rapidly now, as the dogs had quickened their pace. The moon had risen, and the riding, for men who hunted recklessly, was not bad. Through woods and across fields, over fences and streams, down by-paths and old roads, they followed the little dogs.

"We're makin' straight for the next county," the sheriff said.

"We're makin' straight for the old Powis settlement," was answered. "Nothin' but niggers have lived there since the war, an' that nigger's there, I'll bet."

"That's so," the sheriff said. "About how many niggers live there now?"

"There ain't more than half a dozen cabins left now. We can easy manage that many."

It was a long rough ride, and in spite of their rapid pace it was some time after midnight before they saw the clearing where clustered the few cabins left of the plantation quarters of a well-known place, which in its day had yielded wealth to its owners. The moon was very bright, and, save for the sound of the horses' feet, the silence was intense.

"Look sharp," the sheriff said; "that nigger ain't sleepin' much if he's here, and he might try to slip off."

The dogs were going faster now, and yelping a little.

"Keep up, boys!" and the sheriff spurred his horse.

In a few minutes they thundered into the little settlement, where the dogs were already barking and leaping against a close-shut door. Frightened black faces began to peer out. Low exclamations and guttural ejaculations were heard as the armed men scattered, one to each cabin, while the sheriff hammered at the door where the dogs were jumping.

"It's the sheriff!" he called, "come to get Abram Washington. Bring him out and you kin go back to your beds. We're all armed, and nobody need to try runnin'."

The door opened cautiously, and an old negro looked out. "Abram's my son, Mr. Partin," he said, "an' 'fo' Gawd he ent yer."

"No lyin', old man; the dogs brought us straight here. Don't make me burn

the house down; open the door."

The door was closing, when the sheriff, springing from his horse, forced it steadily back. A shot came from within, but it ranged wild, and in an instant the sheriff's pistol covered the open room, where a smouldering fire gave light. Two of the men followed him, and one, making for the fire, pushed it into a blaze, which revealed a group of negroes--an old man, a young woman, some children, and a young man crouching behind with a gun in his hand. The sheriff walked straight up to the young man, whose teeth were chattering.

"I arrest you," he said; "come on."

"That's the feller," confirmed one of the guard; "I've seen him at Mr. Morris's place."

"Tie him," the sheriff ordered, "while I git that gun. Give it to me, old man, or I'll take you to jail too." It was yielded up--an old-time rifle--and the sheriff smashed it against the side of the chimney, throwing the remnants into the fire. "Lead on," he said, and the young negro was taken outside. Quickly he was lifted on to a horse and tied there, while the former rider mounted behind one of his companions, and they rode out of the settlement into the woods.

"Git into the shadows," one said; "they might be fools enough to shoot."

Once in the road, the sheriff called a halt. "One of you must ride; back to Mr. Morris's place and collect the other search-parties, while we make for Pineville jail. Now, Abram, come on."

"I ent done nuttin', Mr. Parin, suh," the negro urged. "I ent hot Mis' Morris."

"Who said anything 'bout Mrs. Morris?" was asked, sharply.

The negro groaned.

"You're hanging yourself, boy," the sheriff said; "but since you know, where _is_ Mrs. Morris?"

"I dun'no', suh."

"Why did you run away?"

"'Kase I 'fraid Mr. Morris."

"What were you 'fraid of?"

"'Kase Mis' Morris gone."

They were riding rapidly now, and the talk was jolted out.

"Where'?"

"I dun'no', suh, but I ent tech um."

"You're a damned liar."

"No, suh, I ent tech um; I des look at um."

"I'd like to gouge your eyes out!" cried one of the men, and struck him.

"None o' that!" ordered the sheriff. "And you keep your mouth shut, Abram; you'll have time to talk on your trial."

"Blast a trial!" growled the crowd.

"The rope's round his neck now," suggested one, "and I see good trees at every step."

"Please, suh, gentlemen," pleaded the shaking negro, "I ent done nuttin'."

"Shut your mouth!" ordered the sheriff again, "and ride faster. Day'll soon break."

"You're 'fraid Mr. Morris'll ketch us 'fore we reach the jail," laughed one of the guard. And the sheriff did not answer.

The eastern sky was gray when the party rode into Pineville, a small, straggling country town, and clattered through its one street to the jail. To the negro, at least, it was a welcome moment, for, with his feet tied under the horse, his hands tied behind his back, and a rope with a slip-knot round his neck, he had not found the ride a pleasant one. A misstep of his horse would surely have precipitated his hanging, and he knew well that such an accident would have given much satisfaction to his captors. So he uttered a fervent "Teng Gawd!" as he was hustled into the jail gate and heard it close behind him.

Early as it was, most of the town was up and excited. Betting had been high as to whether the sheriff would get the prisoner safe into the jail, and even the winners seemed disappointed that he had accomplished this feat, although they praised his skilful management. But the sheriff knew that if the lady's body was found, that if Mr. Morris could find any proof against the negro, that if Mr. Morris even expressed a wish that the negro should hang, the whole town would side with him instantly; and the sheriff knew, further, that in such an emergency he would be the negro's only defender, and that the jail could easily be carried by the mob.

All these thoughts had been with him during the long night, and though he himself was quite willing to hang the negro, being fully persuaded of his guilt, he was determined to do his official duty, and to save the prisoner's life until sentence was lawfully passed on him. But how? If he could quiet the town before the day brightened, he had a plan, but to accomplish this seemed wellnigh impossible.

He handcuffed the prisoner and locked him into a cell, then advised his escort to go and get food, as before the day was done--indeed, just as soon as Mr. Morris should reach the town--he would probably need them to help him defend the jail.

They nodded among themselves, and winked, and laughed a little, and one said, "Right good play-actin'"; and watching, the sheriff knew that he could depend on only one man, his own brother, to help him. But he sent him off along with the others, and was glad to see that the crowd of townspeople went with his guard, listening eagerly to the details of the suspected tragedy and the subsequent hunt. This was his only chance, and he went at once to the negro's cell.

"Now, Abram," he said, "if you don't want to be a dead man in an hour's time, you'd better do exactly what I tell you."

"Yes, suh, please Gawd."

"Put on this old hat," handing him one, "and pull it down over your eyes, and follow me. When we get outside, you walk along with me like any ordinary nigger going to his work; and remember, if you stir hand or foot more than a walk, you are a dead man. Come on."

There was a back way out of the jail, and to this the sheriff went. Once outside, he walked briskly, the negro keeping step with him diligently. They did not meet any one, and before very long they reached the sheriff's house, which stood on the outskirts of the town. Being a widower, he knocked peremptorily on the door, and when it was opened by his son, he marched his prisoner in without explanation.

"Shut the door, Willie," he said, "and load the Winchester."

"Please, suh--" interjected the negro. For answer, the sheriff took a key from the shelf, and led him out of the back door to where, down a few steps, there was another door leading into an underground cellar.

"Now, Abram," he said, "you're to keep quiet in here till I can take you to the city jail. There is no use your trying to escape, because my two boys'll be about here all day with their repeating rifles, and they can shoot."

"Yes, suh."

"And whoever unlocks this door and tells you to come out, you do it, and do it quick."

"Yes, suh."

Locking the door, the sheriff turned to his son. "You and Charlie must watch that door all day, Willie," he said; "but you musn't seem to watch it; and keep your guns handy, and if that nigger tries to get away, kill him; don't hesitate. I must go back to the jail and make out like he's there. And tell Charlie to feed the horse and hitch him to the buggy, and let him stand ready in the stable, for when I'll want him I'll want him quick. Above all things, don't let anybody know that the nigger's here. But keep the cellar key in your pocket, and shoot if he tries to run. If your uncle Jim comes, do whatever he tells you, but nobody else, lessen they bring a note from me. Now remember. I'm trusting you, boy; and don't you make any mistake about killing the nigger if he tries to escape."

"All right," the boy answered, cheerfully, and the father went away. He almost ran to the jail, and entering once more by the back door, found things undisturbed. Presently his brother called to him, and the gates and doors being opened, came in, bringing a waiter of hot food and coffee.

"I told Jinnie you'd not like to leave the jail," he said, "an' she fixed this up."

"Jinnie's mighty good," the sheriff answered, "and sometimes a woman's mighty handy to have about--sometimes; but I'd not leave one out in the country like Mr. Morris did; no, sir, not in these days. We could do it before the war and during the war, but not now. The old niggers were taught some decency; but these young ones! God help us, for I don't see any safety for this country 'cept Judge Lynch. And I'll tell you this is my first an' last term as sheriff. The work's too dirty."

"Buck Thomas was a boss sheriff," his brother answered; "he found the niggers all right, but the niggers never found the jail, and the niggers were 'fraid to death of him."

"Maybe Buck was right," the sheriff said, "and 'twas heap the easiest way; but here comes the town."

The two men went to the window and saw a crowd of people advancing down the road, led by Mr. Morris and his friends on horseback.

"I b'lieve you're the only man in this town that'll stand by me, Jim," the sheriff said. "I swore in six last night, and I see 'em all in that crowd. Poor Mr. Morris! in his place I'd do just what he's doin'. Blest if yonder ain't Doty Buxton comin' to help me! I'll let him in; but see here, Jim, I'm goin' to send Doty to telegraph to the city for Judge More, and I want

you to slip out the back way right now, and run to my house, and tell Willie to give you the buggy and the nigger, and you drive that nigger into the city. Of course you'll kill him if he tries to escape."

"The nigger ain't here!"

"I'm no fool, Jim. And I'll hold this jail, me and Doty, as long as possible, and you drive like hell! You see?"

"I didn't know you really _wanted_ to save the nigger," his brother remonstrated; "nobody b'lieves that"

"I don't, as a nigger. But you go on now, and I'll send Doty with the telegram, and make time by talkin' to Mr. Morris. I don't think they've found anything; if they had, they'd have come a-galloping, and the devil himself couldn't have stopped 'em. Gosh, but it's awful! Who knows what that nigger's done When I look at Mr. Morris, I wish you fellers had overpowered me last night and had fixed things."

He let his brother out at the back, then went round to the front gate, where he met the man whom he called Doty Buxton.

"Go telegraph Judge More the facts of the case," he said, "an' ask him to come. I don't believe I'll need any men if he'll come; and besides, he and Mr. Morris are friends."

As the man turned away, one of the horsemen rode up to the sheriff.

"We demand that negro," he said.

"I supposed that was what you'd come for, Mr. Mitchell," the sheriff answered; "but you know, sir, that as much as I'd like to oblige you, I'm bound to protect the man. He swears that he's never touched Mrs. Morris."

"Great God, sheriff! how can you mention the thing quietly? You know--"

"Yes, I know; and I know that I'll never do the dirty work of a sheriff a day after my term's up. But we haven't any proof against this nigger except that he ran away--"

"Isn't that enough when the lady can't be found, nor a trace of her?"

"I found the hatchet."

"And--!"

"It was clean, thank God!"

Mr. Mitchell jerked the reins so violently that his horse, tired as he was,

reared and plunged.

"Mr. Morris declines to speak with you," he went on, when the horse had quieted down, "but he's determined that the negro shall not escape, and the whole county'll back him."

"I know that," the sheriff answered, patiently, "and in his place I'd do the same thing; but in my place I must do my official duty. I'll not let the nigger escape, you may be sure of that, and I've telegraphed for Judge More to come out here. I've telegraphed the whole case. Surely Mr. Morris'll trust Judge More?"

Mitchell dragged at his mustache. "Poor Morris is nearly dead," he said.

"Of course; won't he go and eat and rest till Judge More comes? Every house in the town'll be open to him."

"No; he'll not wait nor rest; and we're determined to hang that negro."

"It'll be mighty hard to shed our blood--friends and neighbors," remonstrated the sheriff--"and all over a worthless nigger."

"That's your lookout," Mr. Mitchell answered. "A trial and a big funeral is glory for a negro, and the penitentiary means nothing to them but free board and clothes. I tell you, sheriff, lynching is the only thing that affects them."

"You won't wait even until I get an answer from Judge More?"

"Well, to please you, I'll ask." And Mitchell rode back to his companions.

The conference between the leaders was longer than the sheriff had hoped, and before he was again approached Doty Buxton had returned, saying that Judge More's answer would be sent to the jail just as soon as it came.

"You'll stand by me, Doty?" the sheriff asked.

"'Cause I like you, Mr. Partin," Doty answered, slowly; "not 'cause I want to save the nigger. I b'lieve in my soul he's done drowned the po' lady's body."

"All right; you go inside and be ready to chain the gate if I am run in." Then he waited for the return of the envoy.

John Morris sat on his horse quite apart even from his own friends, and after a few words with him, Mitchell had gone to the group of horsemen about whom the townsmen were gathered. The sheriff did not know what this portended, but he waited patiently, leaning against the wall of the jail and whittling a stick. He knew quite well that all these men were friendly

to him; that they understood his position perfectly, and that they expected him to pretend to do his duty to a reasonable extent, and so far their good-nature would last; but he knew equally well that in their eyes the negro had put himself beyond the pale of the law; that they were determined to hang him and would do it at any cost; and that the only mercy which the culprit could expect from this upper class to which Mr. Morris belonged was that his death would be quick and quiet. He knew also that if they found out that he was in earnest in defending the prisoner he himself would be in danger not only from Mr. Morris and his friends, but from the townsmen as well. Of course all this could be avoided by showing them that the jail was empty; but to do this would be at this stage to insure the fugitive's capture and death. To save the negro he must hold the jail as long as possible, and if he had to shoot, shoot into the ground. All this was quite clear to him; what was not clear was what these men would do when they found that he had saved the negro, and they had stormed an empty jail.

He was an old soldier, and had been in many battles; he had fought hardest when he knew that things were most hopeless; he had risked his life recklessly, and death had been as nothing to him when he had thought that he would die for his country. But now--now to risk his life for a negro, for a worthless creature who he thought deserved hanging--was this his duty? Why not say, "I have sent the negro to the city"? How quickly those fierce horsemen would dash away down the road! Well, why not? He drew himself up. He was not going to turn coward at this late day. His duty lay very plain before him, and he would not flinch. And he fixed his eyes once more on the little stick he was cutting, and waited.

Presently he saw a movement in the crowd, and the thought flashed across him that they might capture him suddenly while he stood there alone and unarmed. He stepped quickly to the gate, where Doty Buxton waited, and standing in the opening, asked the crowd to stand back, and to send Mr. Mitchell to tell him what the decision was. There was a moment's pause; then Mitchell rode forward.

"Mr. Morris says that Judge More cannot help matters. The negro must die, and at once. We don't want to hurt you, and we don't want to destroy public property, but we are going to have that wretch if we have to burn the jail down. Will you stop all this by delivering the prisoner to us?"

The sheriff shook his head. "I can't do that, sir. But one thing I do ask, that you'll give me warning before you set fire to the jail."

"If that'll make you give up, we'll set fire now."

"I didn't say it'd make me surrender, but only that I'd like to throw a few things out--like Doty Buxton, for instance," smiling a little.

"All right; when we stop trying to break in, we'll be making ready to smoke you out. The jail's empty but for this negro, I hear."

"Yes, the jail's empty; but don't you think you oughter give me a little time to weigh matters?"

"Is there any chance of your surrendering?"

"To be perfectly honest," the sheriff answered, "there isn't." Then, seeing the crowd approaching, he slipped inside the heavy gate, and Doty Buxton chained it. "Now, Doty," he said, "we'll peep through these auger-holes and watch 'em; and when you see' em coming near, you must shoot through these lower holes. Shoot into the ground just in front of 'em. It's nasty to have the dirt jumpin' up right where you've got to walk. I know how it feels. I always wanted to hold up both feet at once. I reckon they've gone to get a log to batter down the gate. They can do it, but I'll make 'em take as long as I can. We musn't hurt anybody, Doty, but we must protect the State property as far as we're able. Here they come! Keep the dirt dancin', Doty. See that? They don't like it. I told you they'd want to take up both feet at once. When bullets are flying round your head, you can't help yourself, but it's hard to put your feet down right where the nasty little things are peckin' about. Here they come again! Keep it up, Doty. See that? They've stopped again. They ain't real mad with me, yet, the boys ain't; only Mr. Morris and his friends are mad. The boys think I'm just pretending to do my duty for the looks of it; but I ain't. Gosh! Now they've fixed it! With Mr. Morris at the front end of that log, there's no hope of scare. He'd walk over dynamite to get that nigger. Poor feller! Here they come at a run! Don't hurt anybody, Doty. Bang! Wait; I'll call a halt by knocking on the gate; it'll gain us a little more time."

"What do you want?" came in answer to the sheriff's taps.

"I'll arrest every man of you for destroying State property," the sheriff answered.

"All right; come do it quick," was the response. "We're waitin', but we won't wait long."

"I reckon we'll have to go inside, Doty," the sheriff said; then to the attacking party, "If you'll wait till Judge More comes, I promise you the nigger'll hang."

For answer there was another blow on the gate.

"Remember, I've warned you!" the sheriff called.

"Hush that rot," was the answer, followed by a third blow.

The sheriff and Doty retreated to the jail, and the attack went on. It was a two-story building of wood, but very strongly built, and unless they tried fire the sheriff hoped to keep the besiegers at bay for a little

while yet. He stationed Doty at one window, and himself took position at another, each with loaded pistols, which were only to be used as before--to make "the dirt jump."

"To tell you the truth, Doty," the sheriff said, "if you boys had had any sense, you'd have overpowered me last night, and we'd not have had all this trouble."

"We wanted to," Doty answered, "but you're new at the business, an' you talked so big we didn't like to make you feel little."

"Here they come!" the sheriff went on, as the stout gate swayed inwards. "One more good lick an' it's down. That's it. Now keep the dirt dancin', Doty, but don't hurt anybody."

Mr. Morris was in the lead, and apparently did not see the "dancin' dirt," for he approached the jail at a run.

"It's no use, Doty," the sheriff said; "all we can do is to wait till they get in, for I'm not going to shoot anybody. It may be wrong to lynch, but in a case like this it's the rightest wrong that ever was." So the sheriff sat there thinking, while Doty watched the attack from the window.

According to his calculations of time and distance, the sheriff thought that the prisoner was now so far on his way as to be almost out of danger by pursuit, and his mind was busy with the other question as to what would happen when the jail was found to be empty. He had not heard from Judge More, but the answer could not have reached him after the attack began. He felt sure that the judge would come, and come by the earliest train, which was now nearly due.

"The old man'll come if he can," he said to himself, "and he'll help me if he comes; and I wish the train would hurry."

He felt glad when he remembered that he had given the keys of the cells to his brother, for though he would try to save further destruction of property by telling the mob that the jail was empty, he felt quite sure that they would not believe him, and in default of keys, would break open every door in the building; which obstinacy would grant him more time in which to hope for Judge More and arbitration. That it was possible for him to slip out once the besiegers had broken in never occurred to him; his only thought was to stay where he was until the end came, whatever that might be. They were taking longer than he had expected, and every moment was a gain.

Doty Buxton came in from the hall, where he had gone to watch operations. "The do' is givin'," he said; "what'll you do?"

"Nothin'," the sheriff answered, slowly.

"Won't you give 'em the keys?"

"I haven't got 'em."

"Gosh!" and Doty's eyes got big as saucers.

Very soon the outer door was down, and the crowd came trooping in, all save John Morris, who stopped in the hallway. He seemed to be unable even to look at the sheriff, and the sheriff felt the averted face more than he would have felt a blow. "We want the keys," Mitchell said.

The sheriff, who had risen, stood with his hands in his pockets, and his eyes, filled with sympathy, fastened on Mr. Morris, standing looking blankly down the empty hall.

"I haven't got the keys, Mr. Mitchell," he answered.

"Oh, come off!" cried one of the townsmen. "Rocky!" cried another. "Yo' granny's hat!" came from a third; while Doty Buxton said, gravely, "Give up, Partin; we've humored this duty business long enough."

"Do I understand you to say that you won't give up the keys?" Mitchell demanded, scornfully.

"No," the sheriff retorted, a little hotly, "you don't understand anything of the kind. I said that I didn't have the keys; and further," he added, after a moment's pause, "I say that this jail is empty."

There was silence for a moment, while the men looked at one another incredulously; then the jeering began again.

"There is nothing to do but to break open the cells," Morris said, sharply, but without turning his head. "We trusted the sheriff last night, and he outwitted us; we must not trust him again."

The sheriff's eyes flashed, and the blood sprang to his face. The crowd stood eagerly silent; but after a second the sheriff answered, quietly,

"You may say what you please to me, Mr. Morris, and I'll not resent it under these circumstances, but I'll swear the jail's empty."

For answer Morris drove an axe furiously against the nearest cell door, and the crowd followed suit. There were not many cells, and as he looked from a window the sheriff counted the doors as they fell in, and listened for the whistle of the train that he hoped would bring Judge More. The doors were going down rapidly, and as each yielded the sheriff could hear cries and demonstrations. What would they do when the last one fell?

Presently Doty Buxton, who had been making observations, came in, pale and excited. "You'd better git yo' pistols," he said, "an' I'll git mine, for they're gittin' madder an' madder every time he ain't there."

"Well," the sheriff answered, "I want you to witness that I ain't armed. My pistols are over there on the table, unloaded. Thank the good Lord!" he exclaimed, suddenly; "there's the train, an' Judge More! I hope he'll come right along."

"An' there goes the last do'!" said Doty, as, after a crash and a momentary silence, oaths and ejaculations filled the air. He drew near the sheriff, but the sheriff moved away.

"Stand back," he said; "you've got little children."

In an instant the crowd rushed in, headed by Morris, whose burning eyes seemed to be starting from his drawn white face. Like a flash Doty sprang forward and wrenched an axe from the infuriated man, crying out, "Partin ain't armed!"

For answer a blow from Morris's fist dropped the sheriff like a dead man. A sudden silence fell, and Morris, standing over his fallen foe, looked about him as if dazed. For an instant he stood so, then with a violent movement he pushed back the crowding men, and lifting the sheriff, dragged him toward the open window.

"Give him air," he ordered, "and go for the doctor, and for cold water!" He laid Partin flat and dragged open his collar. "He's not dead--see there; I struck him on the temple; under the ear would have killed him, but not this, not this! Give me that water, and plenty of it, and move back. He's not dead, no; and I didn't mean to kill him; but he has worked against me all night, and I didn't think a white man would do it."

"He's comin' round, Mr. Morris," said Doty, who knelt on the other side of the sheriff; "an' he didn't bear no malice against you--don't fret; but it's a good thing I jerked that axe outer yo' hand! See, he's ketchin' his breath; it's all right," as Partin opened his eyes slowly and looked about him.

A sound like a sigh came from the crowd, then a voice said, "Here comes Judge More."

Morris was still holding his wet handkerchief on the sheriff's head when the old judge came in.

"My dear boy!" he said, laying his hand on John Morris's shoulder. But Morris shook his head.

"Let's talk business, Judge More," he said, "and let's get Partin into a

chair where he can rest; I've just knocked him over."

Then Morris left the room, and Mitchell with him, going to the far side of the jail-yard, where they walked up and down in silence. It was not long before Judge More and the sheriff joined them.

"The evidence was too slight for lynching," the judge said, looking straight into John Morris's eyes.

"Great God!" Morris cried, and struck his hands together.

"What more do you want?" Mitchell demanded, angrily. "His wife has disappeared, and the negro ran away."

"True, and I'll see to the case myself; but I'm glad that you did not hang the negro."

A boy came up with a telegram.

"From Jim, I reckon," the sheriff said, taking it. "No; it's for you, Mr. Morris."

It was torn open hastily; then Morris looked from one to the other with a blank, scared face, while the paper fluttered from his hold.

Mitchell caught it, and read aloud slowly, as if he did not believe his eyes:

"'Am safe. Will be out on the ten o'clock train. ELEANOR.'"

Morris stood there, shaking, and sobbing hard, dry sobs.

"It'll kill him!" the sheriff said. "Quick, some whiskey!"

A flask was forced between the blue, trembling lips.

"Drink, old fellow," and Mitchell put his arm about Morris's shoulders. "It's all right now, thank God!"

Morris was leaning against his friend, sobbing like a woman. The sheriff drew his coat-sleeve across his eyes, and shook his head.

"What made the nigger run away?" he said, slowly--adding, as if to himself, "God help us!"

A vehicle was borrowed, and the judge and the sheriff drove with John Morris over to the station to meet the ten-o'clock train. The sheriff and the judge remained in the little carriage, and the station agent did his best to leave the whole platform to John Morris. As the moments went by the

look of anxious agony grew deeper on the face of the waiting man. The sheriff's ominous words, falling like a pall over the first flash of his happiness, had filled his mind with wordless terrors. He could scarcely breathe or move, and could not speak when his wife stepped off and put her hands in his. She looked up, and without a query, without a word of explanation, answered the anguished questioning of his eyes, whispering,

"He did not touch me."

Morris staggered a little, then drawing her hand through his arm, he led her to the carriage. She shrank back when she saw the judge and the sheriff on the front seat; but Morris saying, "They must hear your story, dear," she stepped in.

"We are very thankful to see you, Mrs. Morris," the judge said, without turning his head, when the sheriff had touched up the horse and they moved away; "and if you feel able to tell us how it all happened, it'll save time and ease your mind. This is Mr. Partin, the sheriff."

Mrs. Morris looked at the backs of the men in front of her; at their heads that were so studiously held in position that they could not even have glanced at each other; then up at her husband, appealingly.

"Tell it," he said, quietly, and laid his hand on hers that were wrung together in her lap. "You sent Aggie to catch the chickens, and the dog went with her?"

"Yes," fixing her eyes on his; "and I sent"--she stopped with a shiver, and her husband said, "Abram"--"to cut some bushes to make a broom," she went on. "I had been for a walk to the old house, and as I came back I laid my gloves and a bit of vine on the steps, intending to return at once; but I wished to see if the boat was safe, for the water was rising so rapidly." She paused, as if to catch her breath, then, with her eyes still fixed on her husband, she went on, "I did not think that it was safe, and I untied the rope and picked up the paddle that was lying on the dam, intending to drag the boat farther up and tie it to a tree." She stopped again. Her husband put his arm about her.

"And then?" he said.

"And then--something, I don't know what; not a sound, but something--something made me turn, and I saw him--saw him coming--saw him stealing up behind me--with the hatchet in his hand, and a look--a look"--closing her eyes as if in horror--"such an awful, awful look! And everybody gone. Oh, John!" she gasped, and clinging to her husband, she broke into hysterical sobs, while the judge gripped his walking-stick and cleared his throat, and the sheriff swore fiercely under his breath.

"I was paralyzed," she went on, recovering herself, "and when he saw me

looking he stopped. The next moment he threw the hatchet at me, and began to run toward me. The hatchet struck my foot, and the blow roused me, and I sprang into the boat. There were no trees just there, and jumping in, I pushed the boat off into the deep water. He picked up the hatchet and shook it at me, but the water was too deep for him to reach me, and he ran back along the dam and turned toward the railroad embankment. I was so terrified I could scarcely breathe; I pushed frantically in and out between the trees, farther and farther into the swamp. I was afraid that he would go round to the bridge and come down the bank to where the outlet from the swamp is and catch me there, but in a little while I saw where the rising water had broken the dam, and the current was rushing through and out to the river. The current caught the boat and swept it through the break. Oh, I was so glad! I'm so afraid of water, but not then. I used the paddle as a rudder, and to push floating timber away. My foot was hurting me, and I looked at last and saw that it was cut."

A groan came from the judge, and the sheriff's head drooped.

"All day I drifted, and all night. I was so thirsty, and I grew so weak. At daylight this morning I found myself in a wide sheet of water, with marshes all round, and I saw a steamboat coining. I tied my handkerchief to the paddle and waved it, and they picked me up. And, John, I did not tell them anything except that the freshet had swept me away. They were kind to me, and a friendly woman bound up my foot. We got to town this morning early, and the captain lent me five dollars, John--Captain Meakin--so I telegraphed you, and took a carriage to the station and came out. Have--have you caught him? And, oh--but I am afraid--afraid!" And again she broke into hysterical sobs.

She asked no explanation. The negro's guilt was so burned in on her mind, that she was sure that all knew it as well as she.

"You need have no further fears," her husband comforted. And the judge shook his head, and the sheriff swore again.

* * * * *

A white-haired woman in rusty black stood talking to a negro convict. It was in a stockade prison camp in the hill country. She had been a slave-owner once, long ago, and now for her mission-work taught on Sundays in the stockade, trying to better the negroes penned there.

This was a new prisoner, and she was asking him of himself.

"How long are you in for?" she asked.

"Fuhrebber, ma'm; fuh des es long es I lib," the negro answered, looking down to where he was making marks on the ground with his toes.

"And how did you get such a dreadful sentence?"

"I ent do much, ma'm; I des scare a white lady."

A wave of revulsion swept over the teacher, and involuntarily she stepped back. The negro looked up and grinned.

"De hatchet des cut 'e foot a little bit; but I trow de hatchet. I ent tech um; no, ma'm. Den atterwards 'e baby daid; den dey say I muss stay yer fuhrebber. I ent sorry, 'kase I know say I hab to wuck anywheys I is; if I stay yer, if I go 'way, I hab to wuck. En I know say if I git outer dis place Mr. Morris'll kill me sho--des sho. So I like fuh stay yer berry well."

And the teacher went away, wondering if her work--if _any_ work--would avail; and what answer the future would have for this awful problem.

The Scent Of The Roses

Mary E. Wilkins

From A New England Nun and Other Stories (Harper & Brothers Publishers; New York: 1891)

Clarissa May's kitchen table was heaped with rose leaves. She was filling a large brown jar with layers of rose leaves and salt.
She sprinkled in various spices too, then sniffed at the mixture daintily.

“Needs a little more cinnamon,” she murmured.

“I wish you'd let the cinnamon alone,” said a quick, sweet voice — “the cinnamon, and the rose leaves, and the salt, and the
whole of it. I'd like to fling it into the fire.”

“Don't talk so, Anne.”

Anne stood in the door. She had just come down from her chamber. She was all ready to go to the picnic. She wore a
broad-brimmed white straw hat, trimmed with fine pink flowers. Her ruffled, pink-flowered muslin gown fluttered crisply. She had
pinned some pink rose-buds at her throat.

Anne and Clarissa were wonderfully alike, but the comparison would have been less derogatory for Clarissa had they been
different. The resemblance brought the regret and humiliation of loss to her. Anne showed what Clarissa had been. She was the
rose of this spring, her sister was one of last. If both of them had not been roses, the last year's flower would not have seemed
so forlorn.

Clarissa's dull blond hair was brushed smoothly around her ears; Anne's was crinkled, and there were gold lights in it. Clarissa's
skin was tintless and faintly lined; her sister's was warm and rosy and smooth. Clarissa's lips were thin; Anne's, full and red. One's
figure showed angles; the other's, curves.

Clarissa, replying with her mild, deprecating voice, gazed admiringly at her sister. “You look real nice,” she added.

“Sometimes I don't care whether I look nice or not. You do make me so out of patience!”

“Why, Anne, how you talk!”

“I don't care — you do. The idea of you shutting yourself up here, packing a mess of rose leaves into a jar! There isn't any sense
in it.”

“You know I'd rather stay at home.”

“I don't care if you had. It's real nice for me going alone!”

“Ellen Pierson's going, isn't she?”

“I don't care if she is. Sometimes anybody'd like their own sister.”

“I feel as if I was so much older.”

“Older! You're not any older than dozens of girls that go all the time. You're not any older than Addie Leach or Abby Dutton; and I
guess they'd be mad enough if anybody was to tell them they were too old to go.”

“There's a lock of hair loose. Come round here and let me fix it.”

“I don't care if it is,” said Anne. But she stepped over to her sister, nevertheless, and Clarissa tucked up the golden lock carefully.

“P'rhaps I'll go next time,” said she, appeasingly. “All is, I don't feel much like it, you know. People don't, I suppose, as they grow
older.”

“If they get up a party to go on West Mountain next week, will you go?”

“I'll see about it.”

“I'll crimp your hair, and we'll fix over your blue dress.”

“You'll be late, if you don't run along.”

“Do I look all right?”

“Yes. I guess your hair'll stay up now.”

After Anne had danced out with a crisp swish of muslin skirts, Clarissa went on with her work. She gathered up the soft rose
leaves with her little thin veiny hands, and laid them in the jar with the greatest care.

She was soon interrupted again, however. “Oh, here you are!” said another voice. There was a contemptuous inflection in it. A
tall, pale woman stood in the door. She held out a package of letters and a little white box stiffly in one hand.

“Oh, is it you, Aunt Joanna?”

“Yes, it's me. Why ain't you gone to the picnic?”

“I didn't feel like it.”

“Didn't feel like it! I s'pose you felt more like putterin' over rose leaves. Clarissa May, I b'lieve you're jest about a fool.”

“I don't know what you mean.” Clarissa glanced at the letters, and her hands trembled.

“Yes, you do know what I mean. I came in the front way, an' went up-stairs. I wanted a piece of brown cambric to line my sleeves,
an' I thought I'd see if you hadn't got any. An' I found these things in your bottom bureau drawer, tucked away in the corner out of
sight. I'd like to know why you've kept these old letters of Gilman Lane's so dreadful choice for all this time. They were wrote
much as ten year ago, some of 'em.”

“Aunt Joanna, give me those letters, please.”

Clarissa trembled so she could scarcely speak. She felt as if all the light in the world was shining on her heart and showing it forth
pitilessly, dispelling all its innocent shadows, which had seemed like guilty ones to her.

“I never see such a mess of nonsense in my life: all ‘darling’ an' ‘dear.’ It's enough to make anybody sick.”

“Aunt Joanna, you haven't read them?”

“I guess I have read 'em, every line. I rather think I had a right to, as long as you're my sister's daughter. I s'pose he give you this
breast-pin too, eh?”

“Aunt Joanna!”

“You needn't look so toppin'. When you've been doin' the way you have late years, never stirrin' out of the house except to
meetin', an' actin' as if you'd give up the world, it's about time you was looked out after. Now I jest want to know if Gilman Lane
give you the mitten, an' if that's what ails you?”

“Aunt Joanna, if you'll give me those letters —”

“If he has, he's a mean scamp, an' you're an awful fool, that's all I've got to say. Before I'd spend my whole life frettin' over one
feller!”

“Aunt Joanna, you haven't any right to come here talking to me so.”

“I guess I've got as good a right as anybody. I guess you won't find anybody that thinks much more of you, or is more interested
in you, than me. Clarissa May, what I want to know is this — was you engaged to Gilman Lane?”

“No,” said Clarissa, shortly. Then she turned her face obstinately away, and went to work on her rose leaves again, and would not
speak another word. Her aunt questioned and reproved a while longer; then finding that she could get no further response, threw
the letters and box down on the table, and left.

“If I had such soft letters lying around I'd burn 'em. I wouldn't leave 'em where folks could get 'em,” said she. She turned around
as she went out of the door. “I took that piece of brown cambric you had in your blue box, but I don' know as it's enough.”

Clarissa had been intending to use the cambric herself, but she said not a word. After her aunt had gone she carried the letters
up-stairs, and put them in their old place; then returned to her work.

She filled the jar quite full, then tidied up her kitchen. When the noon bells were ringing, her Aunt Joanna appeared again. She
had a covered plate in her hand. She had brought over some warm dinner. Clarissa thanked her, and took it. Neither of the
women alluded to the letters. But the niece looked after her aunt as she went out of the yard, and if she could have smitten her
with a total loss of memory, she would have done it in her shame and distress.

Clarissa May knew every line of those old letters by heart. She knew whereabouts the lines stood on the pages, and the words in
the lines. The few fond adjectives shone out like jewels among them. Now she thought them all over, she recounted one after
another, and she said to herself, “Aunt Joanna has seen this, and this.”

She set away the dinner untasted, put on her afternoon dress, and sat down with her sewing at the sitting-room window.

Anne found her there when she returned from the picnic. Anne had lost a little of her crisp daintiness of the morning. Her yellow
hair was tumbled, her cheeks were hot, and her muslin dress was crumpled.

She sat down in the first chair with a sigh. “Oh,” said she, “I'm glad to get in where it's cool! It's terrible out in the sun.”

She looked around the room and at her sister approvingly. There were a certain patience and tranquillity about Clarissa, as she
sat there sewing, which were cool and refreshing of themselves.

“You look real cool and comfortable,” said Anne.

Clarissa had on an old-fashioned cotton gown of a mixed green-and-white pattern, which suited her soft faded face. This cool old
summer-gown had served her mother before her. The daughter wore it with very little alteration in the straight full skirt and long
prim body. It came out of its winter seclusion every June and seemed as if it would never be worn out. Clarissa regarded it with
gratitude and thankfulness. She wanted Anne to have all the new summer dresses.

The sisters had their small income of one hundred and fifty dollars besides their house. This one hundred and fifty, eked out with
a little sewing which Clarissa did, bought their food and clothes. Clarissa was a good manager, she made a little go so far, and
she was very careful. There was a good deal of fine darning on the sitting-room carpet, but it took close scrutiny to see it among
those faded, whitish-drab scrolls. The room was sweet with roses — living ones, which grew close to the open windows, and
dead ones, which lay conserved with salt and spices in Clarissa's jars. She had converted every unused dish in the house into a
receptacle for her rose leaves. Old china teapots stood about, and sugar bowls, and earthen jars, all exhaling spicy sweetness.
They were in every room in the house. The amusements which life held for Clarissa seemed to be concentrated into this one
gentle, erratic one of conserving rose leaves. And the amusement was of such long standing that it was almost like a duty to her.
It is doubtful if she did not unconsciously think it wrong to let a rose leaf entirely perish, with all its sweetness, while she could
save it.

Years ago Gilman Lane had taught her how to make her first pot-pourri. “You ought to save all those roses,” he had said one
far-off summer day. “My Aunt Celia packs 'em in a jar with salt. I'll show you how.”

The two had packed a little blue ginger jar with those old rose leaves. It stood on the shelf in the best parlor now, with the same
ones in it.

Something stronger than any rose fragrance floated from it to Clarissa every time she entered the room. It was the fragrance of
the old memory, which was better conserved than the rose leaves, and formed the lasting element of that first pot-pourri.

“I should think you'd fill up that jar new,” Anne said often. She had no sense for that wonderful sweetness which her elder sister
got from it.

Anne sat still for quite a while to-day. She did not talk as she usually did on a return from a merrymaking. She leaned her head
back in her chair and stared at the opposite wall. There was a thoughtful look in her eyes, but her mouth was half smiling.

“Did you have a good time?” Clarissa asked, finally.

“Real good,” Anne said. Then she hesitated. Her conscious smile grew more distinct; the red on her cheeks deepened. “You
used to know Gilman Lane, didn't you, Clarissa?” she went on. “Why, what is the matter?”

“Nothing.”

“Yes there is, too; you're awful white. Oh, Clarissa, don't you feel well?”

“Just as well as I ever did. Go on. What were you saying? Oh, about Gilman Lane.”

“He was there, you know. He's got back from California, where he's been ten years. I didn't remember him. I was nothing but a
little girl when he went away, anyhow. You used to know him, didn't you?”

“Yes, some.”

“He's real handsome. Ellen introduced him to me; he's a sort of a cousin of hers, you know. She says he's splendid. He's older
than I am. Why, didn't he go to school with you, Clarissa?”

“Yes, I believe he did.”

“Why, it seems to me I remember his coming here sometimes, now I think of it. Didn't he used to?”

“Yes, he used to run in once in a while, I guess.”

“I declare, I do remember it; but I never would have known him. He's splendid-looking.”

Anne rose and took off her bonnet slowly. “How soon are you going to have tea, Clarissa?”

“We'll have it now, if you want it.”

“Well, I don't know but we'd better, and get it out of the way.” Anne stood laughing and fingering her bonnet strings. “To tell you
the truth, I shouldn't wonder a bit if he was up here to-night. What is the matter? I know you're sick, Clarissa.”

“No, I ain't. I guess I'd better go and get tea right away, then.”

“It was a great joke on the other girls, you know. They were all teasing Ellen to introduce them, but he never looked at one of
them. P'rhaps he won't come; but I shouldn't be a bit surprised.”

Gilman Lane did come. His tall, muscular figure passed at dusk that night between the descendants of those old roses, up to the
front-door porch, which was overgrown with them.

Anne answered his knock. She was aglow with modest delight. She looked up in his face with innocent admiration, which he was
foolish not to see. No wonder that this man outshone the gentle village boys in her eyes! Gilman Lane had always been
handsome. He was roughened and browned now by his California life, but that only accentuated his beauty to a country girl like
Anne, who thought naturally of men as antipodes of flowers and women.

“Good-evening, Mr. Lane,” said she, primly, her cheeks pink, her eyes shyly radiant. “Won't you walk in?”

Clarissa, up in her room, heard the knock, the opening door in response, and the firm, manly tread across the entry floor. Then
she heard the murmur of voices in the best parlor. She sat on the edge of her little bed, listening. She was rigid; her hands were
cold as ice.

In a half-hour or so she heard Anne's step on the stairs, and rose hurriedly. She was lighting a candle when her sister entered.

“Come down-stairs,” Anne whispered, “he wants to see you.”

“I can't. I was just going over to Aunt Joanna's.”

“Come along.”

“He doesn't want to see me.”

“Yes, he does. He asked if you were at home. He said he used to know you, and he would like to see you. Come along down. If
you don't, he'll think you don't want him to come here, or something.”

Clarissa, following her imperious young sister down-stairs, went weakly, like an old woman; but Anne, in her joyful inpetuosity,

never noticed it.

Lane rose as the two entered the parlor, and came across the room. He stumbled over a mat in his progress, and colored. He
always managed his great frame a little clumsily.

“Well, how do you do, Clarissa?” said he. His voice was loud and hearty, with a little hesitation in it.

“How do you do, Gilman?” It was that freedom of old days lapsed into formality which is the most chilling of all.

They shook hands; then seated themselves. Clarissa was mute. She felt herself trembling, and wondered if he saw it. He did not;
he was thinking to himself how very cool and stiff she was.

He tried to make some conversation. “You're changed some, Clarissa, like all the rest of us,” he said, laughing awkwardly. There
was a real flush on his brown face.

“I suppose I have,” said Clarissa, delicate and pale and outwardly composed. She smiled faintly in his direction.

“I guess you're a little thinner than you used to be, and you haven't got quite so much color. You're well, aren't you?”

There was an odd tone in his voice then that made Anne stare wonderingly at him.

“Very well, thank you,” Clarissa said.

“It was a good deal of a joke on me, but I declare when I first saw your sister to-day I thought it was you. She looks just the way
you used to, doesn't she?”

“Everybody says she does.”

“She does, sure enough. Why didn't you go to the picnic to-day, Clarissa?”

“I don't go out a great deal.”

“She'd rather stay in the house and fill old sugar bowls and jars with rose leaves,” Anne interrupted, with laughing pettishness.
“I've been telling him about it.”

“I noticed it the minute I came into the house,” said Lane. “I wondered what it was that smelt so sweet.”

“Good reason why,” laughed Anne; “there are four things full of rose leaves in here, besides that blue ginger-jar on the shelf.
They're old in that, and don't smell much. Why don't you fill that one new, Clarissa?”

Lane looked at it gravely. “You ought to,” said he; “that's a real pretty jar.”

He had forgotten all about it. Whatever consciousness his heart held of those old days did not include that. His man's memory
could not keep such small precious things.

“I thought I had about enough,” said Clarissa, trying to speak easily. She looked over at the jar. For a moment it seemed more
valuable to her than the man who had forgotten it and its storied sweetness. “It's all I've got left of anything,” flashed through her
mind. She wanted to seize it and cry over it. The forgetting and slighting this poor little jar made it harder for her to control herself.
She could scarcely keep the tears back. But no one would have guessed it as she sat there pale and slender and prim.

She excused herself before long. She had to go over to her aunt Joanna's, she said, and pleaded some housewifely errand.

Joanna Emmons was a widow. She kept house with her daughter, also a widow, and two unmarried sons.

The family were all in bed, but the doors were never locked. Clarissa went straight in, and groped her way across the dusky
kitchen to her aunt's bedroom door.

“Aunt Joanna!” she called, softly.

“Who is it?” said her aunt, sitting up in bed suddenly. She had not yet fallen asleep.

“It's Clarissa. Say, Aunt Joanna —”

“What are you over here for this time of night? Anne ain't sick, is she?”

“No. I wanted to see you a minute. Aunt Joanna, I wanted to tell you something, and I mean it. It's — about — those letters. If you
ever tell Anne or anybody else anything about them, I'll go away somewhere where you'll never see me again, nor any one else
either.”

“Clarissa May, what do you mean?”

“What I say. You've got to promise me you won't.”

“'Tain't very likely I'm goin' all round town tellin' what a fool my sister's daughter made of herself.”

“Aunt Joanna, you've got to promise me.”

“Clarissa May, let go of my hands! You're crazy. You scare me 'most to death!”

“Promise.”

“Well, I'll promise. I won't speak of 'em to a soul. There!”

“Then I'll go home. Don't you forget.”

“Clarissa, come back here!” her aunt called after her, as she sped across the kitchen; but she was gone.

Anne was in the sitting-room when she reached home. “He went right after you did,” said she, smiling consciously. “I don't think
you treated him very well, Clarissa.”

“I don't see why,” said Clarissa, in a timid way.

“You acted as stiff as a poker. He thought it was awful funny that you didn't go out any more. You've got to go up West Mountain
next week, anyhow.”

Poor Clarissa went. She dragged herself wearily up those steep inclines, trying all the time to smile with the rest of the merry
party. When they reached the summit her face was damp and pale with the heat; her lustreless hair clung close to her forehead.
Anne was all rosy and glowing. Gilman Lane was at her side all day. Several times he tried to talk with Clarissa, but she avoided
him, keeping close to some of the older young women, her mates.

“Gilman Lane is dead in love with Anne May,” she overheard one say, with a furtive glance at her. Some of them remembered
that years ago there had been a similar report in connection with the older sister.

“He's perfectly splendid,” Anne said that night. “Why don't you say more to him, Clarissa? I'm afraid he'll think you don't want him
to come.”

So the next time that Gilman called, Clarissa made an effort to be cordial and talkative. She also remained in the room a little
longer.

The summer passed, the autumn, and the winter; then the spring came again. Gilman Lane still called nearly every week at the
May's.

People said, “Gilman Lane is going with Anne.” Still he hardly fulfilled, in their opinions, all the conditions of courtship. He did not
come regularly on Sunday evenings, neither did he remain late. Clarissa always saw him during a few minutes of every call. Anne
insisted upon it.

“He acts just as if he thought you didn't want him to come and see me, if you don't,” said she. “He said once he guessed my
sister didn't like to have him calling so often.”

Clarissa did not have a doubt as to how it would all end. She was certain that Gilman was fond of Anne. She thought also that her
sister liked him, although she had her pretty, smart way about it, as she did about everything else, and laughed rather than sighed.

So Clarissa in her patient certainty overlooked it all. There was one thing which she dreaded: that was any allusion to the past.
She had a constant fear lest she should chance to see Gilman when her sister was not there. Several times she did not answer
his knock when Anne was away.

Finally the roses were in blossom again. Clarissa's bushes were wonderful this year. The front yard was full of them. The
vegetable garden behind the house had a broad walk edged with them, too.

Clarissa went at her old work again. She moved among the rose-trees, a prim, delicate figure, in her old green-and-white gown,
and cut every loose rose carefully. She was bent, in her graceful parsimoniousness, on saving all that she could of the sweetness
of the world; no matter how poorly she might live herself, her delight in this would not forsake her. She had lost love and youth
and beauty, but she still got a little comfort out of her unselfishness and her roses. One is not entirely desolate while one can
follow his instincts.

Anne laughed at her. “She's gone to filling jars for the neighbors this year,” said Anne. “She filled one for Mrs. Lamson
yesterday.” She and Gilman were in the parlor that afternoon. Gilman laughed. Then he looked out of the window soberly.
Clarissa was in the front yard tending her roses.

“It's real good of her,” said he.

“Of course it is. Clarissa never does anything that isn't good, but she is so funny.”

The next day Gilman came over with a great bunch of roses from his brother's garden. They were a different variety from any of
Clarissa's, and very sweet.

The two sisters were in the garden behind the house. He hunted about until he found them. He held out the roses awkwardly to
Clarissa.

“I thought maybe you'd like 'em,” said he. “I guess they're different from yours.”

“You haven't got any like them, have you, Clarissa?” said Anne, eagerly. “My! I never saw any so sweet.”

Clarissa thanked him. “I haven't got any like them,” said she. Her voice was a little unsteady.

Presently she carried the roses into the house. Gilman turned to Anne. “Look here,” said he, “I want to ask you something.”

Anne glanced at him. Then she turned her head so that he could barely see the pink curve of one cheek. She began pulling some
roses busily. “I guess I'll pick some to put in the parlor vases,” said she. “What is it you wanted to ask?”

“I want to know — I've been coming here pretty near a whole year, and I don't seem to be a bit nearer finding out anything than I
was when I started. Now I'm going to ask you point-blank.”

“Oh, Gilman!” Anne murmured. She moved a little farther from him, then she came back. She dropped some of her roses.

“I don't see as I can ask anybody but you. I can't see her alone a minute, no matter how hard I try. Oh, Anne, doesn't she ever tell
you anything? Don't you know if she cares anything at all about me?”

“Who?”

“Why, Clarissa. Doesn't she ever tell you anything, Anne?”

Anne turned her face farther away. She was very white. Her round young limbs were trembling. “Why don't you go into the house
and ask her?” she said, with sweet, shrill incisiveness. “I should say that was the quickest way.”

“She'll run if she sees me coming. She doesn't act as if she wanted me to. Oh, Anne, don't you know anything about it?”

“No, I don't know a thing.”

“You knew we used to go together some, years ago?”

“No, I didn't.”

“We weren't engaged, but it was sort of understood, I'd always thought. It was before I went to California. Father'd lost his
money, and mother was sick, and I thought I'd got to stir around and do something before I said much about getting married.

“We wrote to each other quite a while. Then I got kind of discouraged. I wasn't doing very well, and I didn't see as I was ever
coming home. I had to send every dollar I could save to father, and I began to think I couldn't get married till I was an old man,

and I didn't know but it was sort of silly to say anything about it.

“I dare say my letters showed how I felt. Anyhow, she didn't write quite so often, and then I heard she'd got a beau. That settled me. I should have been home three years ago if I hadn't supposed she was married. I didn't have the courage to ask. I did make up my mind to write and ask mother, though, finally. I thought I could bear it, and might as well know.

“When I found out she wasn't, I came straight here. But she acted so cold and offish the first time I saw her that I thought sure she'd got over thinking anything of me. But once in a while she'd seem a little different, and I couldn't tell. Anne, didn't you ever hear her say anything about me? Sometimes I think I'm a fool to expect she'd remember anything so long ago. I wish I could see her just a minute. I'd like to tell her why I stopped writing, anyhow, though I never supposed she cared much. Her letters had begun to sound rather cool.”

“I'll go in and tell Clarissa that you want to speak to her,” said Anne. “I don't see any need of so much fuss.” Her voice sounded sweet and crisp. She swung her blue muslin skirts between the rose-bushes with an air. Her yellow head was proudly erect.

“She looks just the way Clarissa used to,” Gilman thought, as he stared after her.

Presently she reappeared at the entrance of the garden walk. “Go right in,” she called out. Then she went around to the front of the house. “They'll see I ain't shut up in my room, crying,” she thought to herself.

She sauntered about among the bushes, pulling roses here and there. She heard voices behind the parlor blinds. Her face was still pale, but her mouth began to tremble a little at the corners. Anne had a sweet nature. “It's a great joke on me,” she whispered to herself. Then she laughed, with the most unselfish amusement, in the midst of her girlish chagrin and sorrow.

There was a bush of beautiful pink roses down by the gate. Anne stood there picking them when her friend, Ellen Pierson, came down the road, and stopped, leaning her slender elbows on the gate. “What are you picking so many roses for?” asked she.

“I don't know but I shall go to filling up jars with them, like Clarissa,” said Anne.

THE MADONNA OF THE FUTURE

by Henry James

The Project Gutenberg etext of The Madonna of the Future

We had been talking about the masters who had achieved but a single masterpiece—the artists and poets who but once in their lives had known the divine afflatus and touched the high level of perfection. Our host had been showing us a charming little cabinet picture by a painter whose name we had never heard, and who, after this single spasmodic bid for fame, had apparently relapsed into obscurity and mediocrity. There was some discussion as to the frequency of this phenomenon; during which, I observed, H--- sat silent, finishing his cigar with a meditative air, and looking at the picture which was being handed round the table. "I don't know how common a case it is," he said at last, "but I have seen it. I have known a poor fellow who painted his one masterpiece, and"—he added with a smile—"he didn't even paint that. He made his bid for fame and missed it." We all knew H--- for a clever man who had seen much of men and manners, and had a great stock of reminiscences. Some one immediately questioned him further, and while I was engrossed with the raptures of my neighbour over the little picture, he was induced to tell his tale. If I were to doubt whether it would bear repeating, I should only have to remember how that charming woman, our hostess, who had left the table, ventured back in rustling rose-colour to pronounce our lingering a want of gallantry, and, finding us a listening circle, sank into her chair in spite of our cigars, and heard the story out so graciously that, when the catastrophe was reached, she glanced across at me and showed me a tear in each of her beautiful eyes.

* * * * *

It relates to my youth, and to Italy: two fine things! (H--- began). I had arrived late in the evening at Florence, and while I finished my bottle of wine at supper, had fancied that, tired traveller though I was, I might pay the city a finer compliment than by going vulgarly to bed. A narrow passage wandered darkly away out of the little square before my hotel, and looked as if it bored into the heart of Florence. I followed it, and at the end of ten minutes emerged upon a great piazza, filled only with the mild autumn moonlight. Opposite rose the Palazzo Vecchio, like some huge civic fortress, with the great bell-tower springing from its embattled verge as a mountain-pine from the edge of a cliff. At its base, in its projected shadow, gleamed certain dim sculptures which I wonderingly approached. One of the images, on the left of the palace door, was a magnificent colossus, shining through the dusky air like a sentinel who has taken the alarm. In a moment I recognised him as Michael Angelo's David. I turned with a certain relief from his sinister strength to a slender figure in bronze, stationed beneath the high light loggia, which opposes the free and elegant span of its arches to the dead masonry of the palace; a figure supremely shapely and graceful; gentle, almost, in spite of his holding out with his light nervous arm the snaky head of the slaughtered Gorgon. His name is Perseus, and you may read his story, not in the Greek mythology, but in the memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini. Glancing from one of these fine fellows to the other, I probably uttered some irrepressible commonplace of praise, for, as if provoked by my voice, a man rose from the steps of the loggia, where he had been sitting in the shadow, and addressed me in good English—a small, slim personage, clad in a sort of black velvet tunic (as it seemed), and with a mass of auburn hair, which gleamed in the moonlight, escaping from a little mediæval birretta. In a tone of the most insinuating deference he asked me for my

"impressions." He seemed picturesque, fantastic, slightly unreal. Hovering there in this consecrated neighbourhood, he might have passed for the genius of æsthetic hospitality—if the genius of æsthetic hospitality were not commonly some shabby little custode, flourishing a calico pocket-handkerchief and openly resentful of the divided franc. This analogy was made none the less complete by the brilliant tirade with which he greeted my embarrassed silence.

"I have known Florence long, sir, but I have never known her so lovely as tonight. It's as if the ghosts of her past were abroad in the empty streets. The present is sleeping; the past hovers about us like a dream made visible. Fancy the old Florentines strolling up in couples to pass judgment on the last performance of Michael, of Benvenuto! We should come in for a precious lesson if we might overhear what they say. The plainest burgher of them, in his cap and gown, had a taste in the matter! That was the prime of art, sir. The sun stood high in heaven, and his broad and equal blaze made the darkest places bright and the dullest eyes clear. We live in the evening of time! We grope in the gray dusk, carrying each our poor little taper of selfish and painful wisdom, holding it up to the great models and to the dim idea, and seeing nothing but overwhelming greatness and dimness. The days of illumination are gone! But do you know I fancy—I fancy"—and he grew suddenly almost familiar in this visionary fervour—"I fancy the light of that time rests upon us here for an hour! I have never seen the David so grand, the Perseus so fair! Even the inferior productions of John of Bologna and of Baccio Bandinelli seem to realise the artist's dream. I feel as if the moonlit air were charged with the secrets of the masters, and as if, standing here in religious attention, we might—we might witness a revelation!" Perceiving at this moment, I suppose, my halting comprehension reflected in my puzzled face, this interesting rhapsodist paused and blushed. Then with a melancholy smile, "You think me a moonstruck charlatan, I suppose. It's not my habit to bang about the piazza and pounce upon innocent tourists. But tonight, I confess, I am under the charm. And then, somehow, I fancied you too were an artist!"

"I am not an artist, I am sorry to say, as you must understand the term. But pray make no apologies. I am also under the charm; your eloquent remarks have only deepened it."

"If you are not an artist you are worthy to be one!" he rejoined, with an expressive smile. "A young man who arrives at Florence late in the evening, and, instead of going prosaically to bed, or hanging over the traveller's book at his hotel, walks forth without loss of time to pay his devoirs to the beautiful, is a young man after my own heart!"

The mystery was suddenly solved; my friend was an American! He must have been, to take the picturesque so prodigiously to heart. "None the less so, I trust," I answered, "if the young man is a sordid New Yorker."

"New Yorkers have been munificent patrons of art!" he answered, urbanely.

For a moment I was alarmed. Was this midnight reverie mere Yankee enterprise, and was he simply a desperate brother of the brush who had posted himself here to extort an "order" from a sauntering tourist? But I was not called to defend myself. A great brazen note broke suddenly from the far-off summit of the bell-tower above us, and sounded the first stroke of midnight. My companion started, apologised for detaining me, and prepared to retire. But he seemed to offer so lively a promise of further entertainment that I was indisposed to part with him, and suggested that we should stroll homeward together. He cordially assented; so we turned out of the Piazza, passed down before the statued arcade of the Uffizi, and

came out upon the Arno.
What course we took I hardly remember, but we roamed slowly about for an hour, my companion delivering by snatches a sort of moon-touched æsthetic lecture. I listened in puzzled fascination, and wondered who the deuce he was. He confessed with a melancholy but all-respectful head-shake to his American origin.

"We are the disinherited of Art!" he cried. "We are condemned to be superficial! We are excluded from the magic circle. The soil of American perception is a poor little barren artificial deposit. Yes! we are wedded to imperfection. An American, to excel, has just ten times as much to learn as a European. We lack the deeper sense. We have neither taste, nor tact, nor power. How should we have them? Our crude and garish climate, our silent past, our deafening present, the constant pressure about us of unlovely circumstance, are as void of all that nourishes and prompts and inspires the artist, as my sad heart is void of bitterness in saying so! We poor aspirants must live in perpetual exile."

"You seem fairly at home in exile," I answered, "and Florence seems to me a very pretty Siberia. But do you know my own thought? Nothing is so idle as to talk about our want of a nutritive soil, of opportunity, of inspiration, and all the rest of it. The worthy part is to do something fine! There is no law in our glorious Constitution against that. Invent, create, achieve! No matter if you have to study fifty times as much as one of these! What else are you an artist for? Be you our Moses," I added, laughing, and laying my hand on his shoulder, "and lead us out of the house of bondage!"

"Golden words—golden words, young man!" he cried, with a tender smile. "'Invent, create, achieve!' Yes, that's our business; I know it well. Don't take me, in Heaven's name, for one of your barren complainers—impotent cynics who have neither talent nor faith! I am at work!"—and he glanced about him and lowered his voice as if this were a quite peculiar secret—"I'm at work night and day. I have undertaken a creation! I am no Moses; I am only a poor patient artist; but it would be a fine thing if I were to cause some slender stream of beauty to flow in our thirsty land! Don't think me a monster of conceit," he went on, as he saw me smile at the avidity with which he adopted my illustration; "I confess that I am in one of those moods when great things seem possible! This is one of my nervous nights—I dream waking! When the south wind blows over Florence at midnight it seems to coax the soul from all the fair things locked away in her churches and galleries; it comes into my own little studio with the moonlight, and sets my heart beating too deeply for rest. You see I am always adding a thought to my conception! This evening I felt that I couldn't sleep unless I had communed with the genius of Buonarotti!"

He seemed deeply versed in local history and tradition, and he expatiated con amore on the charms of Florence. I gathered that he was an old resident, and that he had taken the lovely city into his heart. "I owe her everything," he declared. "It's only since I came here that I have really lived, intellectually. One by one, all profane desires, all mere worldly aims, have dropped away from me, and left me nothing but my pencil, my little note-book" (and he tapped his breast-pocket), "and the worship of the pure masters—those who were pure because they were innocent, and those who were pure because they were strong!"

"And have you been very productive all this time?" I asked sympathetically.

He was silent a while before replying. "Not in the vulgar sense!" he said at last. "I have chosen never to manifest myself by imperfection. The good in every performance I have re-absorbed into the generative force of new creations; the bad—there is

always plenty of that—I have religiously destroyed. I may say, with some satisfaction, that I have not added a mite to the rubbish of the world. As a proof of my conscientiousness"—and he stopped short, and eyed me with extraordinary candour, as if the proof were to be overwhelming—"I have never sold a picture! 'At least no merchant traffics in my heart!' Do you remember that divine line in Browning? My little studio has never been profaned by superficial, feverish, mercenary work. It's a temple of labour, but of leisure! Art is long. If we work for ourselves, of course we must hurry. If we work for her, we must often pause. She can wait!"

This had brought us to my hotel door, somewhat to my relief, I confess, for I had begun to feel unequal to the society of a genius of this heroic strain. I left him, however, not without expressing a friendly hope that we should meet again. The next morning my curiosity had not abated; I was anxious to see him by common daylight. I counted upon meeting him in one of the many pictorial haunts of Florence, and I was gratified without delay. I found him in the course of the morning in the Tribune of the Uffizi—that little treasure-chamber of world-famous things. He had turned his back on the Venus de' Medici, and with his arms resting on the rail-mug which protects the pictures, and his head buried in his hands, he was lost in the contemplation of that superb triptych of Andrea Mantegna—a work which has neither the material splendour nor the commanding force of some of its neighbours, but which, glowing there with the loveliness of patient labour, suits possibly a more constant need of the soul. I looked at the picture for some time over his shoulder; at last, with a heavy sigh, he turned away and our eyes met. As he recognised me a deep blush rose to his face; he fancied, perhaps, that he had made a fool of himself overnight. But I offered him my hand with a friendliness which assured him I was not a scoffer. I knew him by his ardent chevelure; otherwise he was much altered. His midnight mood was over, and he looked as haggard as an actor by daylight. He was far older than I had supposed, and he had less bravery of costume and gesture. He seemed the quiet, poor, patient artist he had proclaimed himself, and the fact that he had never sold a picture was more obvious than glorious. His velvet coat was threadbare, and his short slouched hat, of an antique pattern, revealed a rustiness which marked it an "original," and not one of the picturesque reproductions which brethren of his craft affect. His eye was mild and heavy, and his expression singularly gentle and acquiescent; the more so for a certain pallid leanness of visage, which I hardly knew whether to refer to the consuming fire of genius or to a meagre diet. A very little talk, however, cleared his brow and brought back his eloquence.

"And this is your first visit to these enchanted halls?" he cried. "Happy, thrice happy youth!" And taking me by the arm, he prepared to lead me to each of the pre-eminent works in turn and show me the cream of the gallery. But before we left the Mantegna he pressed my arm and gave it a loving look. "He was not in a hurry," he murmured. "He knew nothing of 'raw Haste, half-sister to Delay!'" How sound a critic my friend was I am unable to say, but he was an extremely amusing one; overflowing with opinions, theories, and sympathies, with disquisition and gossip and anecdote. He was a shade too sentimental for my own sympathies, and I fancied he was rather too fond of superfine discriminations and of discovering subtle intentions in shallow places. At moments, too, he plunged into the sea of metaphysics, and floundered a while in waters too deep for intellectual security. But his abounding knowledge and happy judgment told a touching story of long attentive hours in this worshipful company; there was a reproach to my wasteful saunterings in so devoted a culture of opportunity. "There are two moods," I remember his saying, "in which we may walk

through galleries—the critical and the ideal. They seize us at their pleasure, and we can never tell which is to take its turn. The critical mood, oddly, is the genial one, the friendly, the condescending. It relishes the pretty trivialities of art, its vulgar cleverness, its conscious graces. It has a kindly greeting for anything which looks as if, according to his light, the painter had enjoyed doing it—for the little Dutch cabbages and kettles, for the taper fingers and breezy mantles of late-coming Madonnas, for the little blue-hilled, pastoral, sceptical Italian landscapes. Then there are the days of fierce, fastidious longing—solemn church feasts of the intellect—when all vulgar effort and all petty success is a weariness, and everything but the best—the best of the best—disgusts. In these hours we are relentless aristocrats of taste. We will not take Michael Angelo for granted, we will not swallow Raphael whole!"

The gallery of the Uffizi is not only rich in its possessions, but peculiarly fortunate in that fine architectural accident, as one may call it, which unites it—with the breadth of river and city between them—to those princely chambers of the Pitti Palace. The Louvre and the Vatican hardly give you such a sense of sustained inclosure as those long passages projected over street and stream to establish a sort of inviolate transition between the two palaces of art. We passed along the gallery in which those precious drawings by eminent hands hang chaste and gray above the swirl and murmur of the yellow Arno, and reached the ducal saloons of the Pitti. Ducal as they are, it must be confessed that they are imperfect as show-rooms, and that, with their deep-set windows and their massive mouldings, it is rather a broken light that reaches the pictured walls. But here the masterpieces hang thick, and you seem to see them in a luminous atmosphere of their own. And the great saloons, with their superb dim ceilings, their outer wall in splendid shadow, and the sombre opposite glow of mellow canvas and dusky gilding, make, themselves, almost as fine a picture as the Titians and Raphaels they imperfectly reveal. We lingered briefly before many a Raphael and Titian; but I saw my friend was impatient, and I suffered him at last to lead me directly to the goal of our journey—the most tenderly fair of Raphael's virgins, the Madonna in the Chair. Of all the fine pictures of the world, it seemed to me this is the one with which criticism has least to do. None betrays less effort, less of the mechanism of success and of the irrepressible discord between conception and result, which shows dimly in so many consummate works. Graceful, human, near to our sympathies as it is, it has nothing of manner, of method, nothing, almost, of style; it blooms there in rounded softness, as instinct with harmony as if it were an immediate exhalation of genius. The figure melts away the spectator's mind into a sort of passionate tenderness which he knows not whether he has given to heavenly purity or to earthly charm. He is intoxicated with the fragrance of the tenderest blossom of maternity that ever bloomed on earth.

"That's what I call a fine picture," said my companion, after we had gazed a while in silence. "I have a right to say so, for I have copied it so often and so carefully that I could repeat it now with my eyes shut. Other works are of Raphael: this is Raphael himself. Others you can praise, you can qualify, you can measure, explain, account for: this you can only love and admire. I don't know in what seeming he walked among men while this divine mood was upon him; but after it, surely, he could do nothing but die; this world had nothing more to teach him. Think of it a while, my friend, and you will admit that I am not raving. Think of his seeing that spotless image, not for a moment, for a day, in a happy dream, or a restless fever-fit; not as a poet in a five minutes' frenzy—time to snatch his phrase and scribble his immortal stanza; but for days together, while the slow labour of the brush went

on, while the foul vapours of life interposed, and the fancy ached with tension, fixed, radiant, distinct, as we see it now! What a master, certainly! But ah! what a seer!"

"Don't you imagine," I answered, "that he had a model, and that some pretty young woman—"

"As pretty a young woman as you please! It doesn't diminish the miracle! He took his hint, of course, and the young woman, possibly, sat smiling before his canvas. But, meanwhile, the painter's idea had taken wings. No lovely human outline could charm it to vulgar fact. He saw the fair form made perfect; he rose to the vision without tremor, without effort of wing; he communed with it face to face, and resolved into finer and lovelier truth the purity which completes it as the fragrance completes the rose. That's what they call idealism; the word's vastly abused, but the thing is good. It's my own creed, at any rate. Lovely Madonna, model at once and muse, I call you to witness that I too am an idealist!"

"An idealist, then," I said, half jocosely, wishing to provoke him to further utterance, "is a gentleman who says to Nature in the person of a beautiful girl, 'Go to, you are all wrong! Your fine is coarse, your bright is dim, your grace is gaucherie. This is the way you should have done it!' Is not the chance against him?"

He turned upon me almost angrily, but perceiving the genial savour of my sarcasm, he smiled gravely. "Look at that picture," he said, "and cease your irreverent mockery! Idealism is that! There's no explaining it; one must feel the flame! It says nothing to Nature, or to any beautiful girl, that they will not both forgive! It says to the fair woman, 'Accept me as your artist friend, lend me your beautiful face, trust me, help me, and your eyes shall be half my masterpiece!' No one so loves and respects the rich realities of nature as the artist whose imagination caresses and flatters them. He knows what a fact may hold (whether Raphael knew, you may judge by his portrait, behind us there, of Tommaso Inghirami); bad his fancy hovers above it, as Anal hovered above the sleeping prince. There is only one Raphael, bad an artist may still be an artist. As I said last night, the days of illumination are gone; visions are rare; we have to look long to see them. But in meditation we may still cultivate the ideal; round it, smooth it, perfect it. The result—the result," (here his voice faltered suddenly, and he fixed his eyes for a moment on the picture; when they met my own again they were full of tears)—"the result may be less than this; but still it may be good, it may be great!" he cried with vehemence. "It may hang somewhere, in after years, in goodly company, and keep the artist's memory warm. Think of being known to mankind after some such fashion as this! of hanging here through the slow centuries in the gaze of an altered world; living on and on in the cunning of an eye and hand that are part of the dust of ages, a delight and a law to remote generations; making beauty a force and purity an example!"

"Heaven forbid," I said, smiling, "that I should take the wind out of your sails! But doesn't it occur to you that, besides being strong in his genius, Raphael was happy in a certain good faith of which we have lost the trick? There are people, I know, who deny that his spotless Madonnas are anything more than pretty blondes of that period enhanced by the Raphaelesque touch, which they declare is a profane touch. Be that as it may, people's religious and æsthetic needs went arm in arm, and there was, as I may say, a demand for the Blessed Virgin, visible and adorable, which must have given firmness to the artist's hand. I am afraid there is no demand now."

My companion seemed painfully puzzled; he shivered, as it were, in this chilling blast of scepticism. Then shaking his head with sublime confidence—"There is always a

demand!" he cried; "that ineffable type is one of the eternal needs of man's heart; but pious souls long for it in silence, almost in shame. Let it appear, and their faith grows brave. How should it appear in this corrupt generation? It cannot be made to order. It could, indeed, when the order came, trumpet-toned, from the lips of the Church herself, and was addressed to genius panting with inspiration. But it can spring now only from the soil of passionate labour and culture. Do you really fancy that while, from time to time, a man of complete artistic vision is born into the world, that image can perish? The man who paints it has painted everything. The subject admits of every perfection—form, colour, expression, composition. It can be as simple as you please, and yet as rich; as broad and pure, and yet as full of delicate detail. Think of the chance for flesh in the little naked, nestling child, irradiating divinity; of the chance for drapery in the chaste and ample garment of the mother! think of the great story you compress into that simple theme! Think, above all, of the mother's face and its ineffable suggestiveness, of the mingled burden of joy and trouble, the tenderness turned to worship, and the worship turned to far-seeing pity! Then look at it all in perfect line and lovely colour, breathing truth and beauty and mastery!"

"Anch' io son pittore!" I cried. "Unless I am mistaken, you have a masterpiece on the stocks. If you put all that in, you will do more than Raphael himself did. Let me know when your picture is finished, and wherever in the wide world I may be, I will post back to Florence and pay my respects to—the Madonna of the future!"

He blushed vividly and gave a heavy sigh, half of protest, half of resignation. "I don't often mention my picture by name. I detest this modern custom of premature publicity. A great work needs silence, privacy, mystery even. And then, do you know, people are so cruel, so frivolous, so unable to imagine a man's wishing to paint a Madonna at this time of day, that I have been laughed at—laughed at, sir!" and his blush deepened to crimson. "I don't know what has prompted me to be so frank and trustful with you. You look as if you wouldn't laugh at me. My dear young man"—and he laid his hand on my arm—"I am worthy of respect. Whatever my talents may be, I am honest. There is nothing grotesque in a pure ambition, or in a life devoted to it."

There was something so sternly sincere in his look and tone that further questions seemed impertinent. I had repeated opportunity to ask them, however, for after this we spent much time together. Daily for a fortnight, we met by appointment, to see the sights. He knew the city so well, he had strolled and lounged so often through its streets and churches and galleries, he was so deeply versed in its greater and lesser memories, so imbued with the local genius, that he was an altogether ideal valet de place, and I was glad enough to leave my Murray at home, and gather facts and opinions alike from his gossiping commentary. He talked of Florence like a lover, and admitted that it was a very old affair; he had lost his heart to her at first sight. "It's the fashion to talk of all cities as feminine," he said, "but, as a rule, it's a monstrous mistake. Is Florence of the same sex as New York, as Chicago? She is the sole perfect lady of them all; one feels towards her as a lad in his teens feels to some beautiful older woman with a 'history.' She fills you with a sort of aspiring gallantry." This disinterested passion seemed to stand my friend in stead of the common social ties; he led a lonely life, and cared for nothing but his work. I was duly flattered by his having taken my frivolous self into his favour, and by his generous sacrifice of precious hours to my society. We spent many of these hours among those early paintings in which Florence is so rich, returning ever and anon, with restless sympathies, to wonder whether these tender blossoms of art had not a vital fragrance and savour more precious than the full-

fruited knowledge of the later works.

We lingered often in the sepulchral chapel of San Lorenzo, and watched Michael Angelo's dim-visaged warrior sitting there like some awful Genius of Doubt and brooding behind his eternal mask upon the mysteries of life. We stood more than once in the little convent chambers where Fra Angelico wrought as if an angel indeed had held his hand, and gathered that sense of scattered dews and early bird-notes which makes an hour among his relics seem like a morning stroll in some monkish garden. We did all this and much more—wandered into dark chapels, damp courts, and dusty palace-rooms, in quest of lingering hints of fresco and lurking treasures of carving.

I was more and more impressed with my companion's remarkable singleness of purpose. Everything was a pretext for some wildly idealistic rhapsody or reverie. Nothing could be seen or said that did not lead him sooner or later to a glowing discourse on the true, the beautiful, and the good. If my friend was not a genius, he was certainly a monomaniac; and I found as great a fascination in watching the odd lights and shades of his character as if he had been a creature from another planet. He seemed, indeed, to know very little of this one, and lived and moved altogether in his own little province of art. A creature more unsullied by the world it is impossible to conceive, and I often thought it a flaw in his artistic character that he had not a harmless vice or two. It amused me greatly at times to think that he was of our shrewd Yankee race; but, after all, there could be no better token of his American origin than this high æsthetic fever. The very heat of his devotion was a sign of conversion; those born to European opportunity manage better to reconcile enthusiasm with comfort. He had, moreover, all our native mistrust for intellectual discretion, and our native relish for sonorous superlatives. As a critic he was very much more generous than just, and his mildest terms of approbation were "stupendous," "transcendent," and "incomparable." The small change of admiration seemed to him no coin for a gentleman to handle; and yet, frank as he was intellectually, he was personally altogether a mystery. His professions, somehow, were all half-professions, and his allusions to his work and circumstances left something dimly ambiguous in the background. He was modest and proud, and never spoke of his domestic matters. He was evidently poor; yet he must have had some slender independence, since he could afford to make so merry over the fact that his culture of ideal beauty had never brought him a penny. His poverty, I supposed, was his motive for neither inviting me to his lodging nor mentioning its whereabouts. We met either in some public place or at my hotel, where I entertained him as freely as I might without appearing to be prompted by charity. He seemed always hungry, and this was his nearest approach to human grossness.

I made a point of asking no impertinent questions, but, each time we met, I ventured to make some respectful allusion to the magnum opus, to inquire, as it were, as to its health and progress. "We are getting on, with the Lord's help," he would say, with a grave smile. "We are doing well. You see, I have the grand advantage that I lose no time. These hours I spend with you are pure profit. They are suggestive! Just as the truly religious soul is always at worship, the genuine artist is always in labour. He takes his property wherever he finds it, and learns some precious secret from every object that stands up in the light. If you but knew the rapture of observation! I gather with every glance some hint for light, for colour, or relief! When I get home, I pour out my treasures into the lap of toy Madonna. Oh, I am not idle! Nulla dies sine linea."

I was introduced in Florence to an American lady whose drawing-room had long formed an attractive place of reunion for the foreign residents. She lived on a fourth floor, and she was not rich; but she offered her visitors very

good tea, little cakes at option, and conversation not quite to match. Her conversation had mainly an æsthetic flavour, for Mrs. Coventry was famously "artistic." Her apartment was a sort of Pitti Palace au petit pied. She possessed "early masters" by the dozen—a cluster of Peruginos in her dining-room, a Giotto in her boudoir, an Andrea del Sarto over her drawing-room chimney-piece. Surrounded by these treasures, and by innumerable bronzes, mosaics, majolica dishes, and little worm-eaten diptychs covered with angular saints on gilded backgrounds, our hostess enjoyed the dignity of a sort of high-priestess of the arts. She always wore on her bosom a huge miniature copy of the Madonna della Seggiola. Gaining her ear quietly one evening, I asked her whether she knew that remarkable man, Mr. Theobald.

"Know him!" she exclaimed; "know poor Theobald! All Florence knows him, his flame-coloured locks, his black velvet coat, his interminable harangues on the beautiful, and his wondrous Madonna that mortal eye has never seen, and that mortal patience has quite given up expecting."

"Really," I cried, "you don't believe in his Madonna?"

"My dear ingenuous youth," rejoined my shrewd friend, "has he made a convert of you? Well, we all believed in him once; he came down upon Florence and took the town by storm. Another Raphael, at the very least, had been born among men, and the poor dear United States were to have the credit of him. Hadn't he the very hair of Raphael flowing down on his shoulders? The hair, alas, but not the head! We swallowed him whole, however; we hung upon his lips and proclaimed his genius on the house-tops. The women were all dying to sit to him for their portraits and be made immortal, like Leonardo's Joconde. We decided that his manner was a good deal like Leonardo's—mysterious, and inscrutable, and fascinating. Mysterious it certainly was; mystery was the beginning and the end of it. The months passed by, and the miracle hung fire; our master never produced his masterpiece. He passed hours in the galleries and churches, posturing, musing, and gazing; he talked more than ever about the beautiful, but he never put brush to canvas. We had all subscribed, as it were, to the great performance; but as it never came off people began to ask for their money again. I was one of the last of the faithful; I carried devotion so far as to sit to him for my head. If you could have seen the horrible creature he made of me, you would admit that even a woman with no more vanity than will tie her bonnet straight must have cooled off then. The man didn't know the very alphabet of drawing! His strong point, he intimated, was his sentiment; but is it a consolation, when one has been painted a fright, to know it has been done with peculiar gusto? One by one, I confess, we fell away from the faith, and Mr. Theobald didn't lift his little finger to preserve us. At the first hint that we were tired of waiting, and that we should like the show to begin, he was off in a huff. 'Great work requires time, contemplation, privacy, mystery! O ye of little faith!' We answered that we didn't insist on a great work; that the five-act tragedy might come at his convenience; that we merely asked for something to keep us from yawning, some inexpensive little lever de rideau. Hereupon the poor man took his stand as a genius misconceived and persecuted, an âme méconnue, and washed his hands of us from that hour! No, I believe he does me the honour to consider me the head and front of the conspiracy formed to nip his glory in the bud—a bud that has taken twenty years to blossom. Ask him if he knows me, and he will tell you I am a horribly ugly old woman, who has vowed his destruction because he won't paint her portrait as a pendant to Titian's Flora. I fancy that since then he has had none but chance followers, innocent strangers like yourself, who have taken him at his word. The mountain

is still in labour; I have not heard that the mouse has been born. I pass him once in a while in the galleries, and he fixes his great dark eyes on me with a sublimity of indifference, as if I were a bad copy of a Sassoferrato! It is a long time ago now that I heard that he was making studies for a Madonna who was to be a résumé of all the other Madonnas of the Italian school—like that antique Venus who borrowed a nose from one great image and an ankle from another. It's certainly a masterly idea. The parts may be fine, but when I think of my unhappy portrait I tremble for the whole. He has communicated this striking idea under the pledge of solemn secrecy to fifty chosen spirits, to every one he has ever been able to button-hole for five minutes. I suppose he wants to get an order for it, and he is not to blame; for Heaven knows how he lives. I see by your blush," my hostess frankly continued, "that you have been honoured with his confidence. You needn't be ashamed, my dear young man; a man of your age is none the worse for a certain generous credulity. Only allow me to give you a word of advice: keep your credulity out of your pockets! Don't pay for the picture till it's delivered. You have not been treated to a peep at it, I imagine! No more have your fifty predecessors in the faith. There are people who doubt whether there is any picture to be seen. I fancy, myself, that if one were to get into his studio, one would find something very like the picture in that tale of Balzac's—a mere mass of incoherent scratches and daubs, a jumble of dead paint!"

I listened to this pungent recital in silent wonder. It had a painfully plausible sound, and was not inconsistent with certain shy suspicions of my own. My hostess was not only a clever woman, but presumably a generous one. I determined to let my judgment wait upon events. Possibly she was right; but if she was wrong, she was cruelly wrong! Her version of my friend's eccentricities made me impatient to see him again and examine him in the light of public opinion. On our next meeting I immediately asked him if he knew Mrs. Coventry. He laid his hand on my arm and gave me a sad smile. "Has she taxed your gallantry at last?" he asked. "She's a foolish woman. She's frivolous and heartless, and she pretends to be serious and kind. She prattles about Giotto's second manner and Vittoria Colonna's liaison with 'Michael'—one would think that Michael lived across the way and was expected in to take a hand at whist—but she knows as little about art, and about the conditions of production, as I know about Buddhism. She profanes sacred words," he added more vehemently, after a pause. "She cares for you only as some one to band teacups in that horrible mendacious little parlour of hers, with its trumpery Peruginos! If you can't dash off a new picture every three days, and let her hand it round among her guests, she tells them in plain English that you are an impostor!"

This attempt of mine to test Mrs. Coventry's accuracy was made in the course of a late afternoon walk to the quiet old church of San Miniato, on one of the hill-tops which directly overlook the city, from whose gates you are guided to it by a stony and cypress-bordered walk, which seems a very fitting avenue to a shrine. No spot is more propitious to lingering repose than the broad terrace in front of the church, where, lounging against the parapet, you may glance in slow alternation from the black and yellow marbles of the church façade, seamed and cracked with time and wind-sown with a tender flora of its own, down to the full domes and slender towers of Florence and over to the blue sweep of the wide-mouthed cup of mountains into whose hollow the little treasure city has been dropped. I had proposed, as a diversion from the painful memories evoked by Mrs. Coventry's name, that Theobald should go with me the next evening to the opera, where some rarely-played work was to be given. He declined, as I half expected, for I observed that he

regularly kept his evenings in reserve, and never alluded to his manner of passing them. "You have reminded me before," I said, smiling, "of that charming speech of the Florentine painter in Alfred de Musset's 'Lorenzaccio': 'I do no harm to anyone. I pass my days in my studio, On Sunday I go to the Annunziata or to Santa Mario; the monks think I have a voice; they dress me in a white gown and a red cap, and I take a share in the choruses; sometimes I do a little solo: these are the only times I go into public. In the evening, I visit my sweetheart; when the night is fine, we pass it on her balcony.' I don't know whether you have a sweetheart, or whether she has a balcony. But if you are so happy, it's certainly better than trying to find a charm in a third-rate prima donna."

He made no immediate response, but at last he turned to me solemnly. "Can you look upon a beautiful woman with reverent eyes?"

"Really," I said, "I don't pretend to be sheepish, but I should be sorry to think I was impudent." And I asked him what in the world he meant. When at last I had assured him that I could undertake to temper admiration with respect, he informed me, with an air of religious mystery, that it was in his power to introduce me to the most beautiful woman in Italy —"A beauty with a soul!"

"Upon my word," I cried, "you are extremely fortunate, and that is a most attractive description."

"This woman's beauty," he went on, "is a lesson, a morality, a poem! It's my daily study."

Of course, after this, I lost no time in reminding him of what, before we parted, had taken the shape of a promise. "I feel somehow," he had said, "as if it were a sort of violation of that privacy in which I have always contemplated her beauty. This is friendship, my friend. No hint of her existence has ever fallen from my lips. But with too great a familiarity we are apt to lose a sense of the real value of things, and you perhaps will throw some new light upon it and offer a fresher interpretation."

We went accordingly by appointment to a certain ancient house in the heart of Florence—the precinct of the Mercato Vecchio—and climbed a dark, steep staircase, to the very summit of the edifice. Theobald's beauty seemed as loftily exalted above the line of common vision as his artistic ideal was lifted above the usual practice of men. He passed without knocking into the dark vestibule of a small apartment, and, flinging open an inner door, ushered me into a small saloon. The room seemed mean and sombre, though I caught a glimpse of white curtains swaying gently at an open window. At a table, near a lamp, sat a woman dressed in black, working at a piece of embroidery. As Theobald entered she looked up calmly, with a smile; but seeing me she made a movement of surprise, and rose with a kind of stately grace. Theobald stepped forward, took her hand and kissed it, with an indescribable air of immemorial usage. As he bent his head she looked at me askance, and I thought she blushed.

"Behold the Serafina!" said Theobald, frankly, waving me forward. "This is a friend, and a lover of the arts," he added, introducing me. I received a smile, a curtsey, and a request to be seated.

The most beautiful woman in Italy was a person of a generous Italian type and of a great simplicity of demeanour. Seated again at her lamp, with her embroidery, she seemed to have nothing whatever to say. Theobald, bending towards her in a sort of Platonic ecstasy, asked her a dozen paternally tender questions as to her health, her state of mind, her occupations, and the progress of her embroidery, which he examined minutely and summoned me to admire. It was

some portion of an ecclesiastical vestment—yellow satin wrought with an elaborate design of silver and gold. She made answer in a full rich voice, but with a brevity which I hesitated whether to attribute to native reserve or to the profane constraint of my presence. She had been that morning to confession; she had also been to market, and had bought a chicken for dinner. She felt very happy; she had nothing to complain of except that the people for whom she was making her vestment, and who furnished her materials, should be willing to put such rotten silver thread into the garment, as one might say, of the Lord. From time to time, as she took her slow stitches, she raised her eyes and covered me with a glance which seemed at first to denote a placid curiosity, but in which, as I saw it repeated, I thought I perceived the dim glimmer of an attempt to establish an understanding with me at the expense of our companion. Meanwhile, as mindful as possible of Theobald's injunction of reverence, I considered the lady's personal claims to the fine compliment he had paid her.

That she was indeed a beautiful woman I perceived, after recovering from the surprise of finding her without the freshness of youth. Her beauty was of a sort which, in losing youth, loses little of its essential charm, expressed for the most part as it was in form and structure, and, as Theobald would have said, in "composition." She was broad and ample, low-browed and large-eyed, dark and pale. Her thick brown hair hung low beside her cheek and ear, and seemed to drape her head with a covering as chaste and formal as the veil of a nun. The poise and carriage of her head were admirably free and noble, and they were the more effective that their freedom was at moments discreetly corrected by a little sanctimonious droop, which harmonised admirably with the level gaze of her dark and quiet eye. A strong, serene, physical nature, and the placid temper which comes of no nerves and no troubles, seemed this lady's comfortable portion. She was dressed in plain dull black, save for a sort of dark blue kerchief which was folded across her bosom and exposed a glimpse of her massive throat. Over this kerchief was suspended a little silver cross. I admired her greatly, and yet with a large reserve. A certain mild intellectual apathy belonged properly to her type of beauty, and had always seemed to round and enrich it; but this bourgeoise Egeria, if I viewed her right, betrayed a rather vulgar stagnation of mind. There might have been once a dim spiritual light in her face; but it had long since begun to wane. And furthermore, in plain prose, she was growing stout. My disappointment amounted very nearly to complete disenchantment when Theobald, as if to facilitate my covert inspection, declaring that the lamp was very dim, and that she would ruin her eyes without more light, rose and fetched a couple of candles from the mantelpiece, which he placed lighted on the table. In this brighter illumination I perceived that our hostess was decidedly an elderly woman. She was neither haggard, nor worn, nor gray; she was simply coarse. The "soul" which Theobald had promised seemed scarcely worth making such a point of; it was no deeper mystery than a sort of matronly mildness of lip and brow. I should have been ready even to declare that that sanctified bend of the head was nothing more than the trick of a person constantly working at embroidery. It occurred to me even that it was a trick of a less innocent sort; for, in spite of the mellow quietude of her wits, this stately needlewoman dropped a hint that she took the situation rather less seriously than her friend. When he rose to light the candles she looked across at me with a quick, intelligent smile, and tapped her forehead with her forefinger; then, as from a sudden feeling of compassionate loyalty to poor Theobald, I preserved a blank face, she gave a little shrug and resumed her work.

What was the relation of this singular couple? Was he the most ardent of friends or the most

reverent of lovers? Did she regard him as an eccentric swain, whose benevolent admiration of her beauty she was not ill pleased to humour at this small cost of having him climb into her little parlour and gossip of summer nights? With her decent and sombre dress, her simple gravity, and that fine piece of priestly needlework, she looked like some pious lay-member of a sisterhood, living by special permission outside her convent walls. Or was she maintained here aloft by her friend in comfortable leisure, so that he might have before him the perfect, eternal type, uncorrupted and untarnished by the struggle for existence? Her shapely hands, I observed, wore very fair and white; they lacked the traces of what is called honest toil.

"And the pictures, how do they come on?" she asked of Theobald, after a long pause.

"Finely, finely! I have here a friend whose sympathy and encouragement give me new faith and ardour."

Our hostess turned to me, gazed at me a moment rather inscrutably, and then tapping her forehead with the gesture she had used a minute before, "He has a magnificent genius!" she said, with perfect gravity.

"I am inclined to think so," I answered, with a smile.

"Eh, why do you smile?" she cried. "If you doubt it, you must see the bambino!" And she took the lamp and conducted me to the other side of the room, where on the wall, in a plain black frame, hung a large drawing in red chalk. Beneath it was fastened a little howl for holy water. The drawing represented a very young child, entirely naked, half nestling back against his mother's gown, but with his two little arms outstretched, as if in the act of benediction. It was executed with singular freedom and power, and yet seemed vivid with the sacred bloom of infancy. A sort of dimpled elegance and grace, mingled with its boldness, recalled the touch of Correggio. "That's what he can do!" said my hostess. "It's the blessed little boy whom I lost. It's his very image, and the Signor Teobaldo gave it me as a gift. He has given me many things besides!"

I looked at the picture for some time and admired it immensely. Turning back to Theobald I assured him that if it were hung among the drawings in the Uffizi and labelled with a glorious name it would hold its own. My praise seemed to give him extreme pleasure; he pressed my hands, and his eyes filled with tears. It moved him apparently with the desire to expatiate on the history of the drawing, for he rose and made his adieux to our companion, kissing her band with the same mild ardour as before. It occurred to me that the offer of a similar piece of gallantry on my own part might help me to know what manner of woman she was. When she perceived my intention she withdrew her hand, dropped her eyes solemnly, and made me a severe curtsey. Theobald took my arm and led me rapidly into the street.

"And what do you think of the divine Serafina?" he cried with fervour.

"It is certainly an excellent style of good looks!" I answered.

He eyed me an instant askance, and then seemed hurried along by the current of remembrance. "You should have seen the mother and the child together, seen them as I first saw them—the mother with her head draped in a shawl, a divine trouble in her face, and the bambino pressed to her bosom. You would have said, I think, that Raphael had found his match in common chance. I was coming in, one summer night, from a long walk in the country, when I met this apparition at the city gate. The woman held out her hand. I hardly knew whether to say, 'What do you want?' or to fall down and worship. She asked for a little

money. I saw that she was beautiful and pale; she might have stepped out of the stable of Bethlehem! I gave her money and helped her on her way into the town. I had guessed her story. She, too, was a maiden mother, and she had been turned out into the world in her shame. I felt in all my pulses that here was my subject marvellously realised. I felt like one of the old monkish artists who had had a vision. I rescued the poor creatures, cherished them, watched them as I would have done some precious work of art, some lovely fragment of fresco discovered in a mouldering cloister. In a month—as if to deepen and sanctify the sadness and sweetness of it all—the poor little child died. When she felt that he was going she held him up to me for ten minutes, and I made that sketch. You saw a feverish haste in it, I suppose; I wanted to spare the poor little mortal the pain of his position. After that I doubly valued the mother. She is the simplest, sweetest, most natural creature that ever bloomed in this brave old land of Italy. She lives in the memory of her child, in her gratitude for the scanty kindness I have been able to show her, and in her simple religion! She is not even conscious of her beauty; my admiration has never made her vain. Heaven knows that I have made no secret of it. You must have observed the singular transparency of her expression, the lovely modesty of her glance. And was there ever such a truly virginal brow, such a natural classic elegance in the wave of the hair and the arch of the forehead? I have studied her; I may say I know her. I have absorbed her little by little; my mind is stamped and imbued, and I have determined now to clinch the impression; I shall at last invite her to sit for me!"

"'At last—at last'?" I repeated, in much amazement. "Do you mean that she has never done so yet?"

"I have not really had—a—a sitting," said Theobald, speaking very slowly. "I have taken notes, you know; I have got my grand fundamental impression. That's the great thing! But I have not actually had her as a model, posed and draped and lighted, before my easel."

What had become for the moment of my perception and my tact I am at a loss to say; in their absence I was unable to repress a headlong exclamation. I was destined to regret it. We had stopped at a turning, beneath a lamp. "My poor friend," I exclaimed, laying my hand on his shoulder, "you have dawdled! She's an old, old woman—for a Madonna!"

It was as if I had brutally struck him; I shall never forget the long, slow, almost ghastly look of pain, with which he answered me.

"Dawdled?—old, old?" he stammered. "Are you joking?"

"Why, my dear fellow, I suppose you don't take her for a woman of twenty?"

He drew a long breath and leaned against a house, looking at me with questioning, protesting, reproachful eyes. At last, starting forward, and grasping my arm—"Answer me solemnly: does she seem to you truly old? Is she wrinkled, is she faded, am I blind?"

Then at last I understood the immensity of his illusion how, one by one, the noiseless years had ebbed away and left him brooding in charmed inaction, for ever preparing for a work for ever deferred. It seemed to me almost a kindness now to tell him the plain truth. "I should be sorry to say you are blind," I answered, "but I think you are deceived. You have lost time in effortless contemplation. Your friend was once young and fresh and virginal; but, I protest, that was some years ago. Still, she has de beaux restes. By all means make her sit for you!" I broke down; his face was too horribly reproachful.

He took off his hat and stood passing his handkerchief mechanically over his forehead. "De beaux restes? I thank you for sparing me the plain English. I must make up my Madonna out of de beaux restes! What a masterpiece she will be! Old—old! Old—old!" he murmured.

"Never mind her age," I cried, revolted at what I had done, "never mind my impression of her! You have your memory, your notes, your genius. Finish your picture in a month. I pronounce it beforehand a masterpiece, and I hereby offer you for it any sum you may choose to ask."

He stared, but he seemed scarcely to understand me. "Old—old!" he kept stupidly repeating. "If she is old, what am I? If her beauty has faded, where—where is my strength? Has life been a dream? Have I worshipped too long—have I loved too well?" The charm, in truth, was broken. That the chord of illusion should have snapped at my light accidental touch showed how it had been weakened by excessive tension. The poor fellow's sense of wasted time, of vanished opportunity, seemed to roll in upon his soul in waves of darkness. He suddenly dropped his head and burst into tears.

I led him homeward with all possible tenderness, but I attempted neither to check his grief, to restore his equanimity, nor to unsay the hard truth. When we reached my hotel I tried to induce him to come so.

"We will drink a glass of wine," I said, smiling, "to the completion of the Madonna."

With a violent effort he held up his head, mused for a moment with a formidably sombre frown, and then giving me his hand, "I will finish it," he cried, "in a month! No, in a fortnight! After all, I have it here!" And he tapped his forehead. "Of course she's old! She can afford to have it said of her—a woman who has made twenty years pass like a twelvemonth! Old—old! Why, sir, she shall be eternal!"

I wished to see him safely to his own door, but he waved me back and walked away with an air of resolution, whistling and swinging his cane. I waited a moment, and then followed him at a distance, and saw him proceed to cross the Santa Trinità Bridge. When he reached the middle he suddenly paused, as if his strength had deserted him, and leaned upon the parapet gazing over into the river. I was careful to keep him in sight; I confess that I passed ten very nervous minutes. He recovered himself at last, and went his way, slowly and with hanging head.

That I had really startled poor Theobald into a bolder use of his long-garnered stores of knowledge and taste, into the vulgar effort and hazard of production, seemed at first reason enough for his continued silence and absence; but as day followed day without his either calling or sending me a line, and without my meeting him in his customary haunts, in the galleries, in the Chapel at San Lorenzo, or strolling between the Arno side and the great hedge-screen of verdure which, along the drive of the Cascine, throws the fair occupants of barouche and phaeton into such becoming relief—as for more than a week I got neither tidings nor sight of him, I began to fear that I had fatally offended him, and that, instead of giving a wholesome impetus to his talent, I had brutally paralysed it. I had a wretched suspicion that I had made him ill. My stay at Florence was drawing to a close, and it was important that, before resuming my journey, I should assure myself of the truth. Theobald, to the last, had kept his lodging a mystery, and I was altogether at a loss where to look for him. The simplest course was to make inquiry of the beauty of the Mercato Vecchio, and I confess that unsatisfied curiosity as to the lady herself counselled it as well. Perhaps I had done her injustice, and she was as immortally fresh and fair as be conceived her. I was, at any rate, anxious to

behold once more the ripe enchantress who had made twenty years pass as a twelvemonth. I repaired accordingly, one morning, to her abode, climbed the interminable staircase, and reached her door. It stood ajar, and as I hesitated whether to enter, a little serving-maid came clattering out with an empty kettle, as if she had just performed some savoury errand. The inner door, too, was open; so I crossed the little vestibule and entered the room in which I had formerly been received. It had not its evening aspect. The table, or one end of it, was spread for a late breakfast, and before it sat a gentleman—an individual, at least, of the male sex—doing execution upon a beefsteak and onions, and a bottle of wine. At his elbow, in friendly proximity, was placed the lady of the house. Her attitude, as I entered, was not that of an enchantress. With one hand she held in her lap a plate of smoking maccaroni; with the other she had lifted high in air one of the pendulous filaments of this succulent compound, and was in the act of slipping it gently down her throat. On the uncovered end of the table, facing her companion, were ranged half a dozen small statuettes, of some snuff-coloured substance resembling terra-cotta. He, brandishing his knife with ardour, was apparently descanting on their merits.

Evidently I darkened the door. My hostess dropped liner maccaroni—into her mouth, and rose hastily with a harsh exclamation and a flushed face. I immediately perceived that the Signora Serafina's secret was even better worth knowing than I had supposed, and that the way to learn it was to take it for granted. I summoned my best Italian, I smiled and bowed and apologised for my intrusion; and in a moment, whether or no I had dispelled the lady's irritation, I had at least stimulated her prudence. I was welcome, she said; I must take a seat. This was another friend of hers—also an artist, she declared with a smile which was almost amiable. Her companion wiped his moustache and bowed with great civility. I saw at a glance that he was equal to the situation. He was presumably the author of the statuettes on the table, and he knew a money-spending forestiére when he saw one. He was a small wiry man, with a clever, impudent, tossed-up nose, a sharp little black eye, and waxed ends to his moustache. On the side of his head he wore jauntily a little crimson velvet smoking-cap, and I observed that his feet were encased in brilliant slippers. On Serafina's remarking with dignity that I was the friend of Mr. Theobald, he broke out into that fantastic French of which certain Italians are so insistently lavish, and declared with fervour that Mr. Theobald was a magnificent genius.

"I am sure I don't know," I answered with a shrug. "If you are in a position to affirm it, you have the advantage of me. I have seen nothing from his hand but the bambino yonder, which certainly is fine."

He declared that the bambino was a masterpiece, a pure Corregio. It was only a pity, he added with a knowing laugh, that the sketch had not been made on some good bit of honeycombed old panel. The stately Serafina hereupon protested that Mr. Theobald was the soul of honour, and that he would never lend himself to a deceit. "I am not a judge of genius," she said, "and I know nothing of pictures. I am but a poor simple widow; but I know that the Signor Teobaldo has the heart of an angel and the virtue of a saint. He is my benefactor," she added sententiously. The after-glow of the somewhat sinister flush with which she had greeted me still lingered in her cheek, and perhaps did not favour her beauty; I could not but fancy it a wise custom of Theobald's to visit her only by candle-light. She was coarse, and her pour adorer was a poet.

"I have the greatest esteem for him," I said; "it is for this reason that I have been uneasy at not seeing him for ten days. Have you

seen him? Is he perhaps ill?"

"Ill! Heaven forbid!" cried Serafina, with genuine vehemence.

Her companion uttered a rapid expletive, and reproached her with not having been to see him. She hesitated a moment; then she simpered the least bit and bridled. "He comes to see me—without reproach! But it would not be the same for me to go to him, though, indeed, you may almost call him a man of holy life."

"He has the greatest admiration for you," I said. "He would have been honoured by your visit."

She looked at me a moment sharply. "More admiration than you. Admit that!" Of course I protested with all the eloquence at my command, and my mysterious hostess then confessed that she had taken no fancy to me on my former visit, and that, Theobald not having returned, she believed I had poisoned his mind against her. "It would be no kindness to the poor gentleman, I can tell you that," she said. "He has come to see me every evening for years. It's a long friendship! No one knows him as well as I."

"I don't pretend to know him or to understand him," I said. "He's a mystery! Nevertheless, he seems to me a little—" And I touched my forehead and waved my hand in the air.

Serafina glanced at her companion a moment, as if for inspiration. He contented himself with shrugging his shoulders as he filled his glass again. The padrona hereupon gave me a more softly insinuating smile than would have seemed likely to bloom on so candid a brow. "It's for that that I love him!" she said. "The world has so little kindness for such persons. It laughs at them, and despises them, and cheats them. He is too good for this wicked life! It's his fancy that he finds a little Paradise up here in my poor apartment. If he thinks so, how can I help it? He has a strange belief—really, I ought to be ashamed to tell you—that I resemble the Blessed Virgin: Heaven forgive me! I let him think what he pleases, so long as it makes him happy. He was very kind to me once, and I am not one that forgets a favour. So I receive him every evening civilly, and ask after his health, and let him look at me on this side and that! For that matter, I may say it without vanity, I was worth looking at once! And he's not always amusing, poor man! He sits sometimes for an hour without speaking a word, or else he talks away, without stopping, on art and nature, and beauty and duty, and fifty fine things that are all so much Latin to me. I beg you to understand that he has never said a word to me that I mightn't decently listen to. He may be a little cracked, but he's one of the blessed saints."

"Eh!" cried the man, "the blessed saints were all a little cracked!"

Serafina, I fancied, left part of her story untold; but she told enough of it to make poor Theobald's own statement seem intensely pathetic in its exalted simplicity. "It's a strange fortune, certainly," she went on, "to have such a friend as this dear man—a friend who is less than a lover and more than a friend." I glanced at her companion, who preserved an impenetrable smile, twisted the end of his moustache, and disposed of a copious mouthful. Was he less than a lover? "But what will you have?" Serafina pursued. "In this hard world one must not ask too many questions; one must take what comes and keep what one gets. I have kept my good friend for twenty years, and I do hope that, at this time of day, signore, you have not come to turn him against me!"

I assured her that I had no such design, and that I should vastly regret disturbing Mr. Theobald's habits or convictions. On the contrary, I was alarmed about him, and I should immediately go in search of him. She gave me his address, and a florid account

of her sufferings at his non-appearance. She had not been to him for various reasons; chiefly because she was afraid of displeasing him, as he had always made such a mystery of his home. "You might have sent this gentleman!" I ventured to suggest.

"Ah," cried the gentleman, "he admires the Signora Serafina, but he wouldn't admire me." And then, confidentially, with his finger on his nose, "He's a purist!"

I was about to withdraw, after having promised that I would inform the Signora Serafina of my friend's condition, when her companion, who had risen from table and girded his loins apparently for the onset, grasped me gently by the arm, and led me before the row of statuettes. "I perceive by your conversation, signore, that you are a patron of the arts. Allow me to request your honourable attention for these modest products of my own ingenuity. They are brand-new, fresh from my atelier, and have never been exhibited in public. I have brought them here to receive the verdict of this dear lady, who is a good critic, for all she may pretend to the contrary. I am the inventor of this peculiar style of statuette—of subject, manner, material, everything. Touch them, I pray you; handle them freely—you needn't fear. Delicate as they look, it is impossible they should break! My various creations have met with great success. They are especially admired by Americans. I have sent them all over Europe—to London, Paris, Vienna! You may have observed some little specimens in Paris, on the Boulevard, in a shop of which they constitute the specialty. There is always a crowd about the window. They form a very pleasing ornament for the mantel-shelf of a gay young bachelor, for the boudoir of a pretty woman. You couldn't make a prettier present to a person with whom you wished to exchange a harmless joke. It is not classic art, signore, of course; but, between ourselves, isn't classic art sometimes rather a bore? Caricature, burlesque, la charge, as the French say, has hitherto been confined to paper, to the pen and pencil. Now, it has been my inspiration to introduce it into statuary. For this purpose I have invented a peculiar plastic compound which you will permit me not to divulge. That's my secret, signore! It's as light, you perceive, as cork, and yet as firm as alabaster! I frankly confess that I really pride myself as much on this little stroke of chemical ingenuity as upon the other element of novelty in my creations—my types. What do you say to my types, signore? The idea is bold; does it strike you as happy? Cats and monkeys—monkeys and cats—all human life is there! Human life, of course, I mean, viewed with the eye of the satirist! To combine sculpture and satire, signore, has been my unprecedented ambition. I flatter myself that I have not egregiously failed."

As this jaunty Juvenal of the chimney-piece delivered himself of his persuasive allocution, he took up his little groups successively from the table, held them aloft, turned them about, rapped them with his knuckles, and gazed at them lovingly, with his head on one side. They consisted each of a cat and a monkey, fantastically draped, in some preposterously sentimental conjunction. They exhibited a certain sameness of motive, and illustrated chiefly the different phases of what, in delicate terms, may be called gallantry and coquetry; but they were strikingly clever and expressive, and were at once very perfect cats and monkeys and very natural men and women. I confess, however, that they failed to amuse me. I was doubtless not in a mood to enjoy them, for they seemed to me peculiarly cynical and vulgar. Their imitative felicity was revolting. As I looked askance at the complacent little artist, brandishing them between finger and thumb and caressing them with an amorous eye, he seemed to me himself little more than an exceptionally intelligent ape. I mustered an admiring grin, however, and he blew another blast. "My

figures are studied from life! I have a little menagerie of monkeys whose frolics I contemplate by the hour. As for the cats, one has only to look out of one's back window! Since I have begun to examine these expressive little brutes, I have made many profound observations. Speaking, signore, to a man of imagination, I may say that my little designs are not without a philosophy of their own. Truly, I don't know whether the cats and monkeys imitate us, or whether it's we who imitate them." I congratulated him on his philosophy, and he resumed: "You will do use the honour to admit that I have handled my subjects with delicacy. Eh, it was needed, signore! I have been free, but not too free—eh? Just a hint, you know! You may see as much or as little as you please. These little groups, however, are no measure of my invention. If you will favour me with a call at my studio, I think that you will admit that my combinations are really infinite. I likewise execute figures to command. You have perhaps some little motive—the fruit of your philosophy of life, signore—which you would like to have interpreted. I can promise to work it up to your satisfaction; it shall be as malicious as you please! Allow me to present you with my card, and to remind you that my prices are moderate. Only sixty francs for a little group like that. My statuettes are as durable as bronze—ære perennius, signore—and, between ourselves, I think they are more amusing!"

As I pocketed his card I glanced at Madonna Serafina, wondering whether she had an eye for contrasts. She had picked up one of the little couples and was tenderly dusting it with a feather broom.

What I had just seen and heard had so deepened my compassionate interest in my deluded friend that I took a summary leave, making my way directly to the house designated by this remarkable woman. It was in an obscure corner of the opposite side of the town, and presented a sombre and squalid appearance. An old woman in the doorway, on my inquiring for Theobald, ushered me in with a mumbled blessing and an expression of relief at the poor gentleman having a friend. His lodging seemed to consist of a single room at the top of the house. On getting no answer to my knock, I opened the door, supposing that he was absent, so that it gave me a certain shock to find him sitting there helpless and dumb. He was seated near the single window, facing an easel which supported a large canvas. On my entering he looked up at me blankly, without changing his position, which was that of absolute lassitude and dejection, his arms loosely folded, his legs stretched before him, his head hanging on his breast. Advancing into the room I perceived that his face vividly corresponded with his attitude. He was pale, haggard, and unshaven, and his dull and sunken eye gazed at me without a spark of recognition. I had been afraid that he would greet me with fierce reproaches, as the cruelly officious patron who had turned his contentment to bitterness, and I was relieved to find that my appearance awakened no visible resentment. "Don't you know me?" I asked, as I put out my hand. "Have you already forgotten me?"

He made no response, kept his position stupidly, and left me staring about the room. It spoke most plaintively for itself. Shabby, sordid, naked, it contained, beyond the wretched bed, but the scantiest provision for personal comfort. It was bedroom at once and studio—a grim ghost of a studio. A few dusty casts and prints on the walls, three or four old canvases turned face inward, and a rusty-looking colour-box, formed, with the easel at the window, the sum of its appurtenances. The place savoured horribly of poverty. Its only wealth was the picture on the easel, presumably the famous Madonna. Averted as this was from the door, I was unable to see its face; but at last, sickened by the vacant misery of the spot, I passed behind Theobald, eagerly and

tenderly. I can hardly say that I was surprised at what I found—a canvas that was a mere dead blank, cracked and discoloured by time. This was his immortal work! Though not surprised, I confess I was powerfully moved, and I think that for five minutes I could not have trusted myself to speak. At last my silent nearness affected him; he stirred and turned, and then rose and looked at me with a slowly kindling eye. I murmured some kind ineffective nothings about his being ill and needing advice and care, but he seemed absorbed in the effort to recall distinctly what had last passed between us. "You were right," he said, with a pitiful smile, "I am a dawdler! I am a failure! I shall do nothing more in this world. You opened my eyes; and, though the truth is bitter, I bear you no grudge. Amen! I have been sitting here for a week, face to face with the truth, with the past, with my weakness and poverty and nullity. I shall never touch a brush! I believe I have neither eaten nor slept. Look at that canvas!" he went on, as I relieved my emotion in an urgent request that he would come home with me and dine. "That was to have contained my masterpiece! Isn't it a promising foundation? The elements of it are all here." And he tapped his forehead with that mystic confidence which had marked the gesture before. "If I could only transpose them into some brain that has the hand, the will! Since I have been sitting here taking stock of my intellects, I have come to believe that I have the material for a hundred masterpieces. But my hand is paralysed now, and they will never be painted. I never began! I waited and waited to be worthier to begin, and wasted my life in preparation. While I fancied my creation was growing it was dying. I have taken it all too hard! Michael Angelo didn't, when he went at the Lorenzo! He did his best at a venture, and his venture is immortal. That's mine!" And he pointed with a gesture I shall never forget at the empty canvas. "I suppose we are a genus by ourselves in the providential scheme—we talents that can't act, that can't do nor dare! We take it out in talk, in plans and promises, in study, in visions! But our visions, let me tell you," he cried, with a toss of his head, "have a way of being brilliant, and a man has not lived in vain who has seen the things I have seen! Of course you will not believe in them when that bit of worm-eaten cloth is all I have to show for them; but to convince you, to enchant and astound the world, I need only the hand of Raphael. His brain I already have. A pity, you will say, that I haven't his modesty! Ah, let me boast and babble now; it's all I have left! I am the half of a genius! Where in the wide world is my other half? Lodged perhaps in the vulgar soul, the cunning, ready fingers of some dull copyist or some trivial artisan, who turns out by the dozen his easy prodigies of touch! But it's not for me to sneer at him; he at least does something. He's not a dawdler! Well for me if I had been vulgar and clever and reckless, if I could have shut my eyes and taken my leap."

What to say to the poor fellow, what to do for him, seemed hard to determine; I chiefly felt that I must break the spell of his present inaction, and remove him from the haunted atmosphere of the little room it was such a cruel irony to call a studio. I cannot say I persuaded him to come out with me; he simply suffered himself to be led, and when we began to walk in the open air I was able to appreciate his pitifully weakened condition. Nevertheless, he seemed in a certain way to revive, and murmured at last that he should like to go to the Pitti Gallery. I shall never forget our melancholy stroll through those gorgeous halls, every picture on whose walls seemed, even to my own sympathetic vision, to glow with a sort of insolent renewal of strength and lustre. The eyes and lips of the great portraits appeared to smile in ineffable scorn of the dejected pretender who had dreamed of competing with their triumphant authors; the celestial candour, even, of the Madonna of the Chair, as we paused in perfect silence

before her, was tinged with the sinister irony of the women of Leonardo. Perfect silence, indeed, marked our whole progress—the silence of a deep farewell; for I felt in all my pulses, as Theobald, leaning on my arm, dragged one heavy foot after the other, that he was looking his last. When we came out he was so exhausted that instead of taking him to my hotel to dine, I called a carriage and drove him straight to his own poor lodging. He had sunk into an extraordinary lethargy; he lay back in the carriage, with his eyes closed, as pale as death, his faint breathing interrupted at intervals by a sudden gasp, like a smothered sob or a vain attempt to speak. With the help of the old woman who had admitted me before, and who emerged from a dark back court, I contrived to lead him up the long steep staircase and lay him on his wretched bed. To her I gave him in charge, while I prepared in all haste to seek a physician. But she followed me out of the room with a pitiful clasping of her hands.

"Poor, dear, blessed gentleman," she murmured; "is he dying?"

"Possibly. How long has he been thus?"

"Since a certain night he passed ten days ago. I came up in the morning to make his poor bed, and found him sitting up in his clothes before that great canvas he keeps there. Poor, dear, strange man, he says his prayers to it! He had not been to bed, nor since then, properly! What has happened to him? Has he found out about the Serafina?" she whispered, with a glittering eye and a toothless grin.

"Prove at least that one old woman can be faithful," I said, "and watch him well till I come back." My return was delayed, through the absence of the English physician, who was away on a round of visits, and whom I vainly pursued from house to house before I overtook him. I brought him to Theobald's bedside none too soon. A violent fever had seized our patient, and the case was evidently grave. A couple of hours later I knew that he had brain fever. From this moment I was with him constantly; but I am far from wishing to describe his illness. Excessively painful to witness, it was happily brief. Life burned out in delirium. One night in particular that I passed at his pillow, listening to his wild snatches of regret, of aspiration, of rapture and awe at the phantasmal pictures with which his brain seemed to swarm, comes back to my memory now like some stray page from a lost masterpiece of tragedy. Before a week was over we had buried him in the little Protestant cemetery on the way to Fiesole. The Signora Serafina, whom I had caused to be informed of his illness, had come in person, I was told, to inquire about its progress; but she was absent from his funeral, which was attended by but a scanty concourse of mourners. Half a dozen old Florentine sojourners, in spite of the prolonged estrangement which had preceded his death, had felt the kindly impulse to honour his grave. Among them was my friend Mrs. Coventry, whom I found, on my departure, waiting in her carriage at the gate of the cemetery.

"Well," she said, relieving at last with a significant smile the solemnity of our immediate greeting, "and the great Madonna? Have you seen her, after all?"

"I have seen her," I said; "she is mine—by bequest. But I shall never show her to you."

"And why not, pray?"

"My dear Mrs. Coventry, you would not understand her!"

"Upon my word, you are polite."

"Excuse me; I am sad and vexed and bitter." And with reprehensible rudeness I marched away. I was excessively impatient to leave Florence; my friend's dark spirit seemed diffused through all things. I had packed my

trunk to start for Rome that night, and meanwhile, to beguile my unrest, I aimlessly paced the streets. Chance led me at last to the church of San Lorenzo.
Remembering poor Theobald's phrase about Michael Angelo—"He did his best at a venture"—I went in and turned my steps to the chapel of the tombs. Viewing in sadness the sadness of its immortal treasures, I fancied, while I stood there, that they
needed no ampler commentary than these simple words. As I passed through the church again to leave it, a woman, turning
away from one of the side altars, met me face to face. The black shawl depending from her head draped picturesquely the
handsome visage of Madonna Serafina. She stopped as she recognised me, and I saw that she wished to speak. Her eye was
bright, and her ample bosom heaved in a way that seemed to portend a certain sharpness of reproach. But the expression of my
own face, apparently, drew the sting from her resentment, and she addressed me in a tone in which bitterness was tempered by
a sort of dogged resignation. "I know it was you, now, that separated us," she said. "It was a pity he ever brought you to see me!
Of course, you couldn't think of me as he did. Well, the Lord gave him, the Lord has taken him. I have just paid for a nine days'
mass for his soul. And I can tell you this, signore—I never deceived him. Who put it into his head that I was made to live on holy
thoughts and fine phrases? It was his own fancy, and it pleased him to think so.—Did he suffer much?" she added more softly,
after a pause.

"His sufferings were great, but they were short."

"And did he speak of me?" She had hesitated and dropped her eyes; she raised them with her question, and revealed in their
sombre stillness a gleam of feminine confidence which, for the moment, revived and illumined her beauty. Poor Theobald!
Whatever name he had given his passion, it was still her fine eyes that had charmed him.

"Be contented, madam," I answered, gravely.

She dropped her eyes again and was silent. Then exhaling a full rich sigh, as she gathered her shawl together—"He was a
magnificent genius!"

I bowed, and we separated.

Passing through a narrow side street on my way back to my hotel, I perceived above a doorway a sign which it seemed to me I
had read before. I suddenly remembered that it was identical with the superscription of a card that I had carried for an hour in my
waistcoat pocket. On the threshold stood the ingenious artist whose claims to public favour were thus distinctly signalised,
smoking a pipe in the evening air, and giving the finishing polish with a bit of rag to one of his inimitable "combinations." I caught
the expressive curl of a couple of tails. He recognised me, removed his little red cap with a most obsequious bow, and motioned
me to enter his studio. I returned his salute and passed on, vexed with the apparition. For a week afterwards, whenever I was
seized among the ruins of triumphant Rome with some peculiarly poignant memory of Theobald's transcendent illusions and
deplorable failure, I seemed to hear a fantastic, impertinent murmur, "Cats and monkeys, monkeys and cats; all human life there!"

THE TRIUMPH OF NIGHT
by Edith Wharton
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Short Stories for High Schools*, by Various

I

It was clear that the sleigh from Weymore had not come; and the shivering young traveller from Boston, who had so confidently counted on jumping into it when he left the train at Northridge Junction, found himself standing alone on the open platform, exposed to the full assault of night-fall and winter.

The blast that swept him came off New Hampshire snow-fields and ice-hung forests. It seemed to have traversed interminable leagues of frozen silence, filling them with the same cold roar and sharpening its edge against the same bitter black-and-white landscape. Dark, searching, and sword-like, it alternately muffled and harried its victim, like a bull-fighter now whirling his cloak and now planting his darts. This analogy brought home to the young man the fact that he himself had no cloak, and that the overcoat in which he had faced the relatively temperate airs of Boston seemed no thicker than a sheet of paper on the bleak heights of Northridge. George Faxon said to himself that the place was uncommonly well-named. It clung to an exposed ledge over the valley from which the train had lifted him, and the wind combed it with teeth of steel that he seemed actually to hear scraping against the wooden sides of the station. Other building there was none: the village lay far down the road, and thither—since the Weymore sleigh had not come—Faxon saw himself under the immediate necessity of plodding through several feet of snow.

He understood well enough what had happened at Weymore: his hostess had forgotten that he was coming. Young as Faxon was, this sad lucidity of soul had been acquired as the result of long experience, and he knew that the visitors who can least afford to hire a carriage are almost always those whom their hosts forget to send for. Yet to say Mrs. Culme had forgotten him was perhaps too crude a way of putting it. Similar incidents led him to think that she had probably told her maid to tell the butler to telephone the coachman to tell one of the grooms (if no one else needed him) to drive over to Northridge to fetch the new secretary; but on a night like this what groom who respected his rights would fail to forget the order?

Faxon's obvious course was to struggle through the drifts to the village, and there rout out a sleigh to convey him to Weymore; but what if, on his arrival at Mrs. Culme's, no one remembered to ask him what this devotion to duty had cost? That, again, was one of the contingencies he had expensively learned to look out for, and the

perspicacity so acquired told him it would be cheaper to spend the night at the Northridge inn, and advise Mrs. Culme of his presence there by telephone. He had reached this decision, and was about to entrust his luggage to a vague man with a lantern who seemed to have some loose connection with the railway company, when his hopes were raised by the sound of sleigh-bells.

Two vehicles were just dashing up to the station, and from the foremost there sprang a young man swathed in furs.

"Weymore?—No, these are not the Weymore sleighs."

The voice was that of the youth who had jumped to the platform—a voice so agreeable that, in spite of the words, it fell reassuringly on Faxon's ears. At the same moment the wandering station-lantern, casting a transient light on the speaker, showed his features to be in the pleasantest harmony with his voice. He was very fair and very young—hardly in the twenties, Faxon thought—but his face, though full of a morning freshness, was a trifle too thin and fine-drawn, as though a vivid spirit contended in him with a strain of physical weakness. Faxon was perhaps the quicker to notice such delicacies of balance because his own temperament hung on lightly vibrating nerves, which yet, as he believed, would never quite swing him beyond the arc of a normal sensibility.

"You expected a sleigh from Weymore?" the youth continued, standing beside Faxon like a slender column of fur.

Mrs. Culme's secretary explained his difficulty, and the new-comer brushed it aside with a contemptuous "Oh, _Mrs. Culme_!" that carried both speakers a long way toward reciprocal understanding.

"But then you must be——" The youth broke off with a smile of interrogation.

"The new secretary? Yes. But apparently there are no notes to be answered this evening." Faxon's laugh deepened the sense of solidarity which had so promptly established itself between the two.

The new-comer laughed also. "Mrs. Culme," he explained, "was lunching at my uncle's to-day, and she said you were due this evening. But seven hours is a long time for Mrs. Culme to remember anything."

"Well," said Faxon philosophically, "I suppose that's one of the reasons why she needs a secretary. And I've always the inn at Northridge," he concluded.

The youth laughed again. He was at the age when predicaments are food for gaiety.

“Oh, but you haven’t, though! It burned down last week.”

“The deuce it did!” said Faxon; but the humor of the situation struck him also before its inconvenience. His life, for years past, had been mainly a succession of resigned adaptations, and he had learned, before dealing practically with his embarrassments, to extract from most of them a small tribute of amusement.

“Oh, well, there’s sure to be somebody in the place who can put me up.”

“No one _you_ could put up with. Besides, Northridge is three miles off, and our place—in the opposite direction—is a little nearer.” Through the darkness, Faxon saw his friend sketch a gesture of self-introduction. “My name’s Frank Rainer, and I’m staying with my uncle at Overdale. I’ve driven over to meet two friends of his, who are due in a few minutes from New York. If you don’t mind waiting till they arrive I’m sure Overdale can do you better than Northridge. We’re only down from town for a few days, but the house is always ready for a lot of people.”

“But your uncle——?” Faxon could only object, with the odd sense, through his embarrassment, that it would be magically dispelled by his invisible friend’s next words.

“Oh, my uncle—you’ll see! I answer for _him_! I dare say you’ve heard of him—John Lavington?”

John Lavington! There was a certain irony in asking if one had heard of John Lavington! Even from a post of observation as obscure as that of Mrs. Culme’s secretary, the rumor of John Lavington’s money, of his pictures, his politics, his charities and his hospitality, was as difficult to escape as the roar of a cataract in a mountain solitude. It might almost have been said that the one place in which one would not have expected to come upon him was in just such a solitude as now surrounded the speakers—at least in this deepest hour of its desertedness. But it was just like Lavington’s brilliant ubiquity to put one in the wrong even there.

“Oh, yes, I’ve heard of your uncle.”

“Then you _will_ come, won’t you? We’ve only five minutes to wait,” young Rainer urged, in the tone that dispels scruples by ignoring them; and Faxon found himself accepting the invitation as simply as it was offered.

A delay in the arrival of the New York train lengthened their five minutes to fifteen; and as they paced the icy platform Faxon began to see why it had seemed the most natural thing in the world to accede

to his new acquaintance's suggestion. It was because Frank Rainer was one of the privileged beings who simplify human intercourse by the atmosphere of confidence and good humor they diffuse. He produced this effect, Faxon noted, by the exercise of no gift save his youth, of no art save his sincerity; but these qualities were revealed in a smile of such appealing sweetness that Faxon felt, as never before, what Nature can achieve when she deigns to match the face with the mind.

He learned that the young man was the ward, and only nephew, of John Lavington, with whom he had made his home since the death of his mother, the great man's sister. Mr. Lavington, Rainer said, had been "a regular brick" to him—"But then he is to every one. you know"—and the young fellow's situation seemed, in fact to be perfectly in keeping with his person. Apparently the only shade that had ever rested on him was cast by the physical weakness which Faxon had already detected. Young Rainer had been threatened with a disease of the lungs which, according to the highest authorities, made banishment to Arizona or New Mexico inevitable. "But luckily my uncle didn't pack me off, as most people would have done, without getting another opinion. Whose? Oh, an awfully clever chap, a young doctor with a lot of new ideas, who simply laughed at my being sent away, and said I'd do perfectly well in New York if I didn't dine out too much, and if I dashed off occasionally to Northridge for a little fresh air. So it's really my uncle's doing that I'm not in exile—and I feel no end better since the new chap told me I needn't bother." Young Rainer went on to confess that he was extremely fond of dining out, dancing, and other urban distractions; and Faxon, listening to him, concluded that the physician who had refused to cut him off altogether from these pleasures was probably a better psychologist than his seniors.

"All the same you ought to be careful, you know." The sense of elder-brotherly concern that forced the words from Faxon made him, as he spoke, slip his arm impulsively through Frank Rainer's.

The latter met the movement with a responsive pressure. "Oh, I _am_: awfully, awfully. And then my uncle has such an eye on me!"

"But if your uncle has such an eye on you, what does he say to your swallowing knives out here in this Siberian wild?"

Rainer raised his fur collar with a careless gesture. "It's not that that does it—the cold's good for me."

"And it's not the dinners and dances? What is it, then?" Faxon good-humoredly insisted; to which his companion answered with a laugh: "Well, my uncle says it's being bored; and I rather think he's right!"

His laugh ended in a spasm of coughing and a struggle for breath that made Faxon, still holding his arm, guide him hastily into the shelter

of the fireless waiting-room.

Young Rainer had dropped down on the bench against the wall and pulled off one of his fur gloves to grope for a handkerchief. He tossed aside his cap and drew the handkerchief across his forehead, which was intensely white, and beaded with moisture, though his face retained a healthy glow. But Faxon's gaze remained fastened to the hand he had uncovered: it was so long, so colorless, so wasted, so much older than the brow he passed it over.

"It's queer—a healthy face but dying hands," the secretary mused; he somehow wished young Rainer had kept on his glove.

The whistle of the express drew the young men to their feet, and the next moment two heavily-furred gentlemen had descended to the platform and were breasting the rigor of the night. Frank Rainer introduced them as Mr. Grisben and Mr. Balch, and Faxon, while their luggage was being lifted into the second sleigh, discerned them, by the roving lantern-gleam, to be an elderly gray-headed pair, apparently of the average prosperous business cut.

They saluted their host's nephew with friendly familiarity, and Mr. Grisben, who seemed the spokesman of the two, ended his greeting with a genial—"and many many more of them, dear boy!" which suggested to Faxon that their arrival coincided with an anniversary. But he could not press the inquiry, for the seat allotted him was at the coachman's side, while Frank Rainer joined his uncle's guests inside the sleigh.

A swift flight (behind such horses as one could be sure of John Lavington's having) brought them to tall gate-posts, an illuminated lodge, and an avenue on which the snow had been levelled to the smoothness of marble. At the end of the avenue the long house loomed through trees, its principal bulk dark but one wing sending out a ray of welcome; and the next moment Faxon was receiving a violent impression of warmth and light, of hot-house plants, hurrying servants, a vast spectacular oak hall like a stage-setting, and, in its unreal middle distance, a small concise figure, correctly dressed, conventionally featured, and utterly unlike his rather florid conception of the great John Lavington.

The shock of the contrast remained with him through his hurried dressing in the large impersonally luxurious bedroom to which he had been shown. "I don't see where he comes in," was the only way he could put it, so difficult was it to fit the exuberance of Lavington's public personality into his host's contracted frame and manner. Mr. Lavington, to whom Faxon's case had been rapidly explained by young Rainer, had welcomed him with a sort of dry and stilted cordiality that exactly matched his narrow face, his stiff hand, the whiff of scent on his evening handkerchief. "Make yourself at home—at home!"

he had repeated, in a tone that suggested, on his own part, a complete inability to perform the feat he urged on his visitor. “Any friend of Frank’s ... delighted ... make yourself thoroughly at home!”

II

In spite of the balmy temperature and complicated conveniences of Faxon’s bedroom, the injunction was not easy to obey. It was wonderful luck to have found a night’s shelter under the opulent roof of Overdale, and he tasted the physical satisfaction to the full. But the place, for all its ingenuities of comfort, was oddly cold and unwelcoming. He couldn’t have said why, and could only suppose that Mr. Lavington’s intense personality—intensely negative, but intense all the same—must, in some occult way, have penetrated every corner of his dwelling. Perhaps, though, it was merely that Faxon himself was tired and hungry, more deeply chilled than he had known till he came in from the cold, and unutterably sick of all strange houses, and of the prospect of perpetually treading other people’s stairs.

“I hope you’re not famished?” Rainer’s slim figure was in the doorway. “My uncle has a little business to attend to with Mr. Grisben, and we don’t dine for half an hour. Shall I fetch you, or can you find your way down? Come straight to the dining-room—the second door on the left of the long gallery.”

He disappeared, leaving a ray of warmth behind him, and Faxon, relieved, lit a cigarette and sat down by the fire.

Looking about with less haste, he was struck by a detail that had escaped him. The room was full of flowers—a mere “bachelor’s room,” in the wing of a house opened only for a few days, in the dead middle of a New Hampshire winter! Flowers were everywhere, not in senseless profusion, but placed with the same conscious art he had remarked in the grouping of the blossoming shrubs that filled the hall. A vase of arums stood on the writing-table, a cluster of strange-hued carnations on the stand at his elbow, and from wide bowls of glass and porcelain clumps of freesia-bulbs diffused their melting fragrance. The fact implied acres of glass—but that was the least interesting part of it. The flowers themselves, their quality, selection and arrangement, attested on some one’s part—and on whose but John Lavington’s?—a solicitous and sensitive passion for that particular embodiment of beauty. Well, it simply made the man, as he had appeared to Faxon, all the harder to understand!

The half-hour elapsed, and Faxon, rejoicing at the near prospect of food, set out to make his way to the dining-room. He had not noticed the direction he had followed in going to his room, and was puzzled, when he left it, to find that two staircases, of apparently equal

importance, invited him. He chose the one to his right, and reached, at its foot, a long gallery such as Rainer had described. The gallery was empty, the doors down its length were closed; but Rainer had said: "The second to the left," and Faxon, after pausing for some chance enlightenment which did not come, laid his hand on the second knob to the left.

The room he entered was square, with dusky picture-hung walls. In its centre, about a table lit by veiled lamps, he fancied Mr. Lavington and his guests to be already seated at dinner; then he perceived that the table was covered not with viands but with papers, and that he had blundered into what seemed to be his host's study. As he paused in the irresolution of embarrassment Frank Rainer looked up.

"Oh, here's Mr. Faxon. Why not ask him——?"

Mr. Lavington, from the end of the table, reflected his nephew's smile in a glance of impartial benevolence.

"Certainly. Come in, Mr. Faxon. If you won't think it a liberty——"

Mr. Grisben, who sat opposite his host, turned his solid head toward the door. "Of course Mr. Faxon's an American citizen?"

Frank Rainer laughed. "That's all right!... Oh, no, not one of your pin-pointed pens, Uncle Jack! Haven't you got a quill somewhere?"

Mr. Balch, who spoke slowly and as if reluctantly, in a muffled voice of which there seemed to be very little left, raised his hand to say: "One moment: you acknowledge this to be——?"

"My last will and testament?" Rainer's laugh redoubled. "Well, I won't answer for the 'last.' It's the first one, anyway."

"It's a mere formula," Mr. Balch explained.

"Well, here goes." Rainer dipped his quill in the inkstand his uncle had pushed in his direction, and dashed a gallant signature across the document.

Faxon, understanding what was expected of him, and conjecturing that the young man was signing his will on the attainment of his majority, had placed himself behind Mr. Grisben, and stood awaiting his turn to affix his name to the instrument. Rainer, having signed, was about to push the paper across the table to Mr. Balch; but the latter, again raising his hand, said in his sad imprisoned voice: "The seal——?"

"Oh, does there have to be a seal?"

Faxon, looking over Mr. Grisben at John Lavington, saw a faint frown between his impassive eyes. “Really, Frank!” He seemed, Faxon thought, slightly irritated by his nephew’s frivolity.

“Who’s got a seal?” Frank Rainer continued, glancing about the table. “There doesn’t seem to be one here.”

Mr. Grisben interposed. “A wafer will do. Lavington, you have a wafer?”

Mr. Lavington had recovered his serenity. “There must be some in one of the drawers. But I’m ashamed to say I don’t know where my secretary keeps these things. He ought, of course, to have seen to it that a wafer was sent with the document.”

“Oh, hang it——” Frank Rainer pushed the paper aside: “It’s the hand of God—and I’m hungry as a wolf. Let’s dine first, Uncle Jack.”

“I think I’ve a seal upstairs,” said Faxon suddenly.

Mr. Lavington sent him a barely perceptible smile. “So sorry to give you the trouble——”

“Oh, I say, don’t send him after it now. Let’s wait till after dinner!”

Mr. Lavington continued to smile on his guest, and the latter, as if under the faint coercion of the smile, turned from the room and ran upstairs. Having taken the seal from his writing-case he came down again, and once more opened the door of the study. No one was speaking when he entered—they were evidently awaiting his return with the mute impatience of hunger, and he put the seal in Rainer’s reach, and stood watching while Mr. Grisben struck a match and held it to one of the candles flanking the inkstand. As the wax descended on the paper Faxon remarked again the singular emaciation, the premature physical weariness, of the hand that, held it: he wondered if Mr. Lavington had ever noticed his nephew’s hand, and if it were not poignantly visible to him now.

With this thought in his mind, Faxon raised his eyes to look at Mr. Lavington. The great man’s gaze rested on Frank Rainer with an expression of untroubled benevolence; and at the same instant Faxon’s attention was attracted by the presence in the room of another person, who must have joined the group while he was upstairs searching for the seal. The new-comer was a man of about Mr. Lavington’s age and figure, who stood directly behind his chair, and who, at the moment when Faxon first saw him, was gazing at young Rainer with an equal intensity of attention. The likeness between the two men—perhaps increased by the fact that the hooded lamps on the table left the figure behind the chair in shadow—struck Faxon the more because of the strange contrast in their expression. John Lavington, during his nephew’s blundering

attempt to drop the wax and apply the seal, continued to fasten on him a look of half-amused affection; while the man behind the chair, so oddly reduplicating the lines of his features and figure, turned on the boy a face of pale hostility.

The impression was so startling Faxon forgot what was going on about him. He was just dimly aware of young Rainer's exclaiming: "Your turn, Mr. Grisben!" of Mr. Grisben's ceremoniously protesting: "No—no; Mr. Faxon first," and of the pen's being thereupon transferred to his own hand. He received it with a deadly sense of being unable to move, or even to understand what was expected of him, till he became conscious of Mr. Grisben's paternally pointing out the precise spot on which he was to leave his autograph. The effort to fix his attention and steady his hand prolonged the process of signing, and when he stood up—a strange weight of fatigue on all his limbs—the figure behind Mr. Lavington's chair was gone.

Faxon felt an immediate sense of relief. It was puzzling that the man's exit should have been so rapid and noiseless, but the door behind Mr. Lavington was screened by a tapestry hanging, and Faxon concluded that the unknown looker-on had merely had to raise it to pass out. At any rate, he was gone, and with his withdrawal the strange weight was lifted. Young Rainer was lighting a cigarette, Mr. Balch meticulously inscribing his name at the foot of the document, Mr. Lavington—his eyes no longer on his nephew—examining a strange white-winged orchid in the vase at his elbow. Everything suddenly seemed to have grown natural and simple again, and Faxon found himself responding with a smile to the affable gesture with which his host declared: "And now, Mr. Faxon, we'll dine."

III

"I wonder how I blundered into the wrong room just now; I thought you told me to take the second door to the left," Faxon said to Frank Rainer as they followed the older men down the gallery.

"So I did; but I probably forgot to tell you which staircase to take. Coming from your bedroom, I ought to have said the fourth door to the right. It's a puzzling house, because my uncle keeps adding to it from year to year. He built this room last summer for his modern pictures."

Young Rainer, pausing to open another door, touched an electric button which sent a circle of light about the walls of a long room hung with canvases of the French impressionist school.

Faxon advanced, attracted by a shimmering Monet, but Rainer laid a hand on his arm.

“He bought that last week for a thundering price. But come along—I’ll show you all this after dinner. Or _he_ will rather—he loves it.”

“Does he really love things?”

Rainer stared, clearly perplexed at the question. “Rather! Flowers and pictures especially! Haven’t you noticed the flowers? I suppose you think his manner’s cold; it seems so at first; but he’s really awfully keen about things.”

Faxon looked quickly at the speaker. “Has your uncle a brother?”

“Brother? No—never had. He and my mother were the only ones.”

“Or any relation who—who looks like him? Who might be mistaken for him?”

“Not that I ever heard of. Does he remind you of some one?”

“Yes.”

“That’s queer. We’ll ask him if he’s got a double. Come on!”

But another picture had arrested Faxon, and some minutes elapsed before he and his young host reached the dining-room. It was a large room, with the same conventionally handsome furniture and delicately grouped flowers; and Faxon’s first glance showed him that only three men were seated about the dining-table. The man who had stood behind Mr. Lavington’s chair was not present, and no seat awaited him.

When the young men entered, Mr. Grisben was speaking, and his host, who faced the door, sat looking down at his untouched soup-plate and turning the spoon about in his small dry hand.

“It’s pretty late to call them rumors—they were devilish close to facts when we left town this morning,” Mr. Grisben was saying, with an unexpected incisiveness of tone.

Mr. Lavington laid down his spoon and smiled interrogatively. “Oh, facts—what _are_ facts? Just the way a thing happens to look at a given minute.”

“You haven’t heard anything from town?” Mr. Grisben persisted.

“Not a syllable. So you see ... Balch, a little more of that _petite marmite_. Mr. Faxon ... between Frank and Mr. Grisben, please.”

The dinner progressed through a series of complicated courses, ceremoniously dispensed by a stout butler attended by three tall

footmen, and it was evident that Mr. Lavington took a somewhat puerile satisfaction in the pageant. That, Faxon reflected, was probably the joint in his armor—that and the flowers. He had changed the subject—not abruptly but firmly—when the young men entered, but Faxon perceived that it still possessed the thoughts of the two elderly visitors, and Mr. Balch presently observed, in a voice that seemed to come from the last survivor down a mine-shaft: "If it _does_ come, it will be the biggest crash since '93."

Mr. Lavington looked bored but polite. "Wall Street can stand crashes better than it could then. It's got a robuster constitution."

"Yes; but——"

"Speaking of constitutions," Mr. Grisben intervened: "Frank, are you taking care of yourself?"

A flush rose to young Rainer's cheeks.

"Why, of course! Isn't that what I'm here for?"

"You're here about three days in the month, aren't you? And the rest of the time it's crowded restaurants and hot ballrooms in town. I thought you were to be shipped off to New Mexico?"

"Oh, I've got a new man who says that's rot."

"Well, you don't look as if your new man were right," said Mr. Grisben bluntly.

Faxon saw the lad's color fade, and the rings of shadow deepen under his gay eyes. At the same moment his uncle turned to him with a renewed intensity of attention. There was such solicitude in Mr. Lavington's gaze that it seemed almost to fling a tangible shield between his nephew and Mr. Grisben's tactless scrutiny.

"We think Frank's a good deal better," he began; "this new doctor——"

The butler, coming up, bent discreetly to whisper a word in his ear, and the communication caused a sudden change in Mr. Lavington's expression. His face was naturally so colorless that it seemed not so much to pale as to fade, to dwindle and recede into something blurred and blotted-out. He half rose, sat down again and sent a rigid smile about the table.

"Will you excuse me? The telephone. Peters, go on with the dinner." With small precise steps he walked out of the door which one of the footmen had hastened to throw open.

A momentary silence fell on the group; then Mr. Grisben once more addressed himself to Rainer. “You ought to have gone, my boy; you ought to have gone.”

The anxious look returned to the youth’s eyes. “My uncle doesn’t think so, really.”

“You’re not a baby, to be always governed on your uncle’s opinion. You came of age to-day, didn’t you? Your uncle spoils you ... that’s what’s the matter....”

The thrust evidently went home, for Rainer laughed and looked down with a slight accession of color.

“But the doctor——”

“Use your common sense, Frank! You had to try twenty doctors to find one to tell you what you wanted to be told.”

A look of apprehension overshadowed Rainer’s gaiety. “Oh, come—I say!... What would _you_ do?” he stammered.

“Pack up and jump on the first train.” Mr. Grisben leaned forward and laid a firm hand on the young man’s arm. “Look here: my nephew Jim Grisben is out there ranching on a big scale. He’ll take you in and be glad to have you. You say your new doctor thinks it won’t do you any good; but he doesn’t pretend to say it will do you harm, does he? Well, then—give it a trial. It’ll take you out of hot theatres and night restaurants, anyhow.... And all the rest of it.... Eh, Balch?”

“Go!” said Mr. Balch hollowly. “Go _at once_,” he added, as if a closer look at the youth’s face had impressed on him the need of backing up his friend.

Young Rainer had turned ashy-pale. He tried to stiffen his mouth into a smile. “Do I look as bad as all that?”

Mr. Grisben was helping himself to terrapin. “You look like the day after an earthquake,” he said concisely.

The terrapin had encircled the table, and been deliberately enjoyed by Mr. Lavington’s three visitors (Rainer, Faxon noticed, left his plate untouched) before the door was thrown open to re-admit their host.

Mr. Lavington advanced with an air of recovered composure. He seated himself, picked up his napkin, and consulted the gold-monogrammed menu. “No, don’t bring back the filet.... Some terrapin; yes....” He looked affably about the table. “Sorry to have deserted you, but the storm has played the deuce with the wires, and I had to wait a long time before I

could get a good connection. It must be blowing up for a blizzard."

"Uncle Jack," young Rainer broke out, "Mr. Grisben's been lecturing me."

Mr. Lavington was helping himself to terrapin. "Ah—what about?"

"He thinks I ought to have given New Mexico a show."

"I want him to go straight out to my nephew at Santa Paz and stay there till his next birthday." Mr. Lavington signed to the butler to hand the terrapin to Mr. Grisben, who, as he took a second helping, addressed himself again to Rainer. "Jim's in New York now, and going back the day after to-morrow in Olyphant's private car. I'll ask Olyphant to squeeze you in if you'll go. And when you've been out there a week or two, in the saddle all day and sleeping nine hours a night, I suspect you won't think much of the doctor who prescribed New York."

Faxon spoke up, he knew not why. "I was out there once: it's a splendid life. I saw a fellow—oh, a really _bad_ case—who'd been simply made over by it."

"It _does_ sound jolly," Rainer laughed, a sudden eagerness of anticipation in his tone.

His uncle looked at him gently. "Perhaps Grisben's right. It's an opportunity——"

Faxon looked up with a start: the figure dimly perceived in the study was now more visibly and tangibly planted behind Mr. Lavington's chair.

"That's right, Frank: you see your uncle approves. And the trip out there with Olyphant isn't a thing to be missed. So drop a few dozen dinners and be at the Grand Central the day after to-morrow at five."

Mr. Grisben's pleasant gray eye sought corroboration of his host, and Faxon, in a cold anguish of suspense, continued to watch him as he turned his glance on Mr. Lavington. One could not look at Lavington without seeing the presence at his back, and it was clear that, the next minute, some change in Mr. Grisben's expression must give his watcher a clue.

But Mr. Grisben's expression did not change: the gaze he fixed on his host remained unperturbed, and the clue he gave was the startling one of not seeming to see the other figure.

Faxon's first impulse was to look away, to look anywhere else, to resort again to the champagne glass the watchful butler had already brimmed; but some fatal attraction, at war in him with an overwhelming physical resistance, held his eyes upon the spot they feared.

The figure was still standing, more distinctly, and therefore more resemblingly, at Mr. Lavington's back; and while the latter continued to gaze affectionately at his nephew, his counterpart, as before, fixed young Rainer with eyes of deadly menace.

Faxon, with what felt like an actual wrench of the muscles, dragged his own eyes from the sight to scan the other countenances about the table; but not one revealed the least consciousness of what he saw, and a sense of mortal isolation sank upon him.

"It's worth considering, certainly——" he heard Mr. Lavington continue; and as Rainer's face lit up, the face behind his uncle's chair seemed to gather into its look all the fierce weariness of old unsatisfied hates. That was the thing that, as the minutes labored by, Faxon was becoming most conscious of. The watcher behind the chair was no longer merely malevolent: he had grown suddenly, unutterably tired. His hatred seemed to well up out of the very depths of balked effort and thwarted hopes, and the fact made him more pitiable, and yet more dire.

Faxon's look reverted to Mr. Lavington, as if to surprise in him a corresponding change. At first none was visible: his pinched smile was screwed to his blank face like a gas-light to a white-washed wall. Then the fixity of the smile became ominous: Faxon saw that its wearer was afraid to let it go. It was evident that Mr. Lavington was unutterably tired too, and the discovery sent a colder current through Faxon's veins. Looking down at his untouched plate, he caught the soliciting twinkle of the champagne glass; but the sight of the wine turned him sick.

"Well, we'll go into the details presently," he heard Mr. Lavington say, still on the question of his nephew's future. "Let's have a cigar first. No—not here, Peters." He turned his smile on Faxon. "When we've had coffee I want to show you my pictures."

"Oh, by the way, Uncle Jack—Mr. Faxon wants to know if you've got a double?"

"A double?" Mr. Lavington, still smiling, continued to address himself to his guest. "Not that I know of. Have you seen one, Mr. Faxon?"

Faxon thought: "My God, if I look up now they'll _both_ be looking at me!" To avoid raising his eyes he made as though to lift the glass to his lips; but his hand sank inert, and he looked up. Mr. Lavington's glance was politely bent on him, but with a loosening of the strain about his heart he saw that the figure behind the chair still kept its gaze on Rainer.

“Do you think you’ve seen my double, Mr. Faxon?”

Would the other face turn if he said yes? Faxon felt a dryness in his throat. “No,” he answered.

“Ah? It’s possible I’ve a dozen. I believe I’m extremely usual-looking,” Mr. Lavington went on conversationally; and still the other face watched Rainer.

“It was ... a mistake ... a confusion of memory ...” Faxon heard himself stammer. Mr. Lavington pushed back his chair, and as he did so Mr. Grisben suddenly leaned forward.

“Lavington! What have we been thinking of? We haven’t drunk Frank’s health!”

Mr. Lavington reseated himself. “My dear boy!... Peters, another bottle....” He turned to his nephew. “After such a sin of omission I don’t presume to propose the toast myself ... but Frank knows.... Go ahead, Grisben!”

The boy shone on his uncle. “No, no, Uncle Jack! Mr. Grisben won’t mind. Nobody but _you_—to-day!”

The butler was replenishing the glasses. He filled Mr. Lavington’s last, and Mr. Lavington put out his small hand to raise it.... As he did so, Faxon looked away.

“Well, then—All the good I’ve wished you in all the past years.... I put it into the prayer that the coming ones may be healthy and happy and many ... and _many_, dear boy!”

Faxon saw the hands about him reach out for their glasses. Automatically, he made the same gesture. His eyes were still on the table, and he repeated to himself with a trembling vehemence: “I won’t look up! I won’t.... I won’t....”

His fingers clasped the stem of the glass, and raised it to the level of his lips. He saw the other hands making the same motion. He heard Mr. Grisben’s genial “Hear! Hear!” and Mr. Balch’s hollow echo. He said to himself, as the rim of the glass touched his lips:

“I won’t look up! I swear I won’t!——” and he looked.

The glass was so full that it required an extraordinary effort to hold it there, brimming and suspended, during the awful interval before he could trust his hand to lower it again, untouched, to the table. It was this merciful preoccupation which saved him, kept him from crying out, from losing his hold, from slipping down into the bottomless blackness

that gaped for him. As long as the problem of the glass engaged him he felt able to keep his seat, manage his muscles, fit unnoticeably into the group; but as the glass touched the table his last link with safety snapped. He stood up and dashed out of the room.

IV

In the gallery, the instinct of self-preservation helped him to turn back and sign to young Rainer not to follow. He stammered out something about a touch of dizziness, and joining them presently; and the boy waved an unsuspecting hand and drew back.

At the foot of the stairs Faxon ran against a servant. “I should like to telephone to Weymore,” he said with dry lips.

“Sorry, sir; wires all down. We’ve been trying the last hour to get New York again for Mr. Lavington.”

Faxon shot on to his room, burst into it, and bolted the door. The mild lamplight lay on furniture, flowers, books, in the ashes a log still glimmered. He dropped down on the sofa and hid his face. The room was utterly silent, the whole house was still: nothing about him gave a hint of what was going on, darkly and dumbly, in the horrible room he had flown from, and with the covering of his eyes oblivion and reassurance seemed to fall on him. But they fell for a moment only; then his lids opened again to the monstrous vision. There it was, stamped on his pupils, a part of him forever, an indelible horror burnt into his body and brain. But why into his—just his? Why had he alone been chosen to see what he had seen? What business was it of _his_, in God’s name? Any one of the others, thus enlightened, might have exposed the horror and defeated it; but _he_, the one weaponless and defenceless spectator, the one whom none of the others would believe or understand if he attempted to reveal what he knew—_he_ alone had been singled out as the victim of this atrocious initiation!

Suddenly he sat up, listening: he had heard a step on the stairs. Some one, no doubt, was coming to see how he was—to urge him, if he felt better, to go down and join the smokers. Cautiously he opened his door; yes, it was young Rainer’s step. Faxon looked down the passage, remembered the other stairway, and darted to it. All he wanted was to get out of the house. Not another instant would he breathe its abominable air! What business was it of _his_, in God’s name?

He reached the opposite end of the lower gallery, and beyond it saw the hall by which he had entered. It was empty, and on a long table he recognized his coat and cap among the furs of the other travellers. He got into his coat, unbolted the door, and plunged into the purifying night.

* * * * *

The darkness was deep, and the cold so intense that for an instant it stopped his breathing. Then he perceived that only a thin snow was falling, and resolutely set his face for flight. The trees along the avenue dimly marked his way as he hastened with long strides over the beaten snow. Gradually, while he walked, the tumult in his brain subsided. The impulse to fly still drove him forward, but he began to feel that he was flying from a terror of his own creating, and that the most urgent reason for escape was the need of hiding his state, of shunning other eyes' scrutiny till he should regain his balance.

He had spent the long hours in the train in fruitless broodings on a discouraging situation, and he remembered how his bitterness had turned to exasperation when he found that the Weymore sleigh was not awaiting him. It was absurd, of course; but, though he had joked with Rainer over Mrs. Culme's forgetfulness, to confess it had cost a pang. That was what his rootless life had brought him to: for lack of a personal stake in things his sensibility was at the mercy of such trivial accidents.... Yes; that, and the cold and fatigue, the absence of hope and the haunting sense of starved aptitudes, all these had brought him to the perilous verge over which, once or twice before, his terrified brain had hung.

Why else, in the name of any imaginable logic, human or devilish, should he, a stranger, be singled out for this experience? What could it mean to him, how was he related to it, what bearing had it on his case?... Unless, indeed, it was just because he was a stranger—a stranger everywhere—because he had no personal life, no warm strong screen of private egotisms to shield him from exposure, that he had developed this abnormal sensitiveness to the vicissitudes of others. The thought pulled him up with a shudder. No! Such a fate was too abominable; all that was strong and sound in him rejected it. A thousand times better regard himself as ill, disorganized, deluded, than as the predestined victim of such warnings!

He reached the gates and paused before the darkened lodge. The wind had risen and was sweeping the snow into his face in lacerating streamers. The cold had him in its grasp again, and he stood uncertain. Should he put his sanity to the test and go back? He turned and looked down the dark drive to the house. A single ray shone through the trees, evoking a picture of the lights, the flowers, the faces grouped about that fatal room. He turned and plunged out into the road.

He remembered that, about a mile from Overdale, the coachman had pointed out the road to Northridge; and he began to walk in that direction. Once in the road, he had the gale in his face, and the wet snow on his moustache and eye-lashes instantly hardened to metal. The

same metal seemed to be driving a million blades into his throat and lungs, but he pushed on, desperately determined, the vision of the warm room pursuing him.

The snow in the road was deep and uneven. He stumbled across ruts and sank into drifts, and the wind rose before him like a granite cliff. Now and then he stopped, gasping, as if an invisible hand had tightened an iron band about his body; then he started again, stiffening himself against the stealthy penetration of the cold. The snow continued to descend out of a pall of inscrutable darkness, and once or twice he paused, fearing he had missed the road to Northridge; but, seeing no sign of a turn, he ploughed on doggedly.

At last, feeling sure that he had walked for more than a mile, he halted and looked back. The act of turning brought immediate relief, first because it put his back to the wind, and then because, far down the road, it showed him the advancing gleam of a lantern. A sleigh was coming—a sleigh that might perhaps give him a lift to the village! Fortified by the hope, he began to walk back toward the light. It seemed to come forward very slowly, with unaccountable zigzags and waverings; and even when he was within a few yards of it he could catch no sound of sleigh-bells. Then the light paused and became stationary by the roadside, as though carried by a pedestrian who had stopped, exhausted by the cold. The thought made Faxon hasten on, and a moment later he was stooping over a motionless figure huddled against the snow-bank. The lantern had dropped from its bearer's hand, and Faxon, fearfully raising it, threw its light into the face of Frank Rainer.

"Rainer! What on earth are you doing here?"

The boy smiled back through his pallor. "What are _you_, I'd like to know?" he retorted; and, scrambling to his feet with a clutch on Faxon's arm, he added gaily: "Well, I've run you down, anyhow!"

Faxon stood confounded, his heart sinking. The lad's face was gray.

"What madness——" he began.

"Yes, it _is_. What on earth did you do it for?"

"I? Do what?... Why, I ... I was just taking a walk.... I often walk at night...."

Frank Rainer burst into a laugh. "On such nights? Then you hadn't bolted?"

"Bolted?"

"Because I'd done something to offend you? My uncle thought you had."

Faxon grasped his arm. “Did your uncle send you after me?”

“Well, he gave me an awful rowing for not going up to your room with you when you said you were ill. And when we found you’d gone we were frightened—and he was awfully upset—so I said I’d catch you.... You’re _not_ ill, are you?”

“Ill? No. Never better.” Faxon picked up the lantern. “Come; let’s go back. It was awfully hot in that dining-room,” he added.

“Yes; I hoped it was only that.”

They trudged on in silence for a few minutes; then Faxon questioned: “You’re not too done up?”

“Oh, no. It’s a lot easier with the wind behind us.”

“All right. Don’t talk any more.”

They pushed ahead, walking, in spite of the light that guided them, more slowly than Faxon had walked alone into the gale. The fact of his companion’s stumbling against a drift gave him a pretext for saying: “Take hold of my arm,” and Rainer, obeying, gasped out: “I’m blown!”

“So am I. Who wouldn’t be?”

“What a dance you led me! If it hadn’t been for one of the servants’ happening to see you——”

“Yes: all right. And now, won’t you kindly shut up?”

Rainer laughed and hung on him. “Oh, the cold doesn’t hurt me....”

For the first few minutes after Rainer had overtaken him, anxiety for the lad had been Faxon’s only thought. But as each laboring step carried them nearer to the spot he had been fleeing, the reasons for his flight grew more ominous and more insistent. No, he was not ill; he was not distraught and deluded—he was the instrument singled out to warn and save; and here he was, irresistibly driven, dragging the victim back to his doom!

The intensity of the conviction had almost checked his steps. But what could he do or say? At all costs he must get Rainer out of the cold, into the house and into his bed. After that he would act.

The snow-fall was thickening, and as they reached a stretch of the road between open fields the wind took them at an angle, lashing their faces with barbed thongs. Rainer stopped to take breath, and Faxon felt the

heavier pressure of his arm.

“When we get to the lodge, can’t we telephone to the stable for a sleigh?”

“If they’re not all asleep at the lodge.”

“Oh, I’ll manage. Don’t talk!” Faxon ordered; and they plodded on....

At length the lantern ray showed ruts that curved away from the road under tree-darkness.

Faxon’s spirits rose. “There’s the gate! We’ll be there in five minutes.”

As he spoke he caught, above the boundary hedge, the gleam of a light at the farther end of the dark avenue. It was the same light that had shone on the scene of which every detail was burnt into his brain; and he felt again its overpowering reality. No—he couldn’t let the boy go back!

They were at the lodge at last, and Faxon was hammering on the door. He said to himself: “I’ll get him inside first, and make them give him a hot drink. Then I’ll see—I’ll find an argument....”

There was no answer to his knocking, and after an interval Rainer said: “Look here—we’d better go on.”

“No!”

“I can, perfectly——”

“You sha’n’t go to the house, I say!” Faxon furiously redoubled his blows, and at length steps sounded on the stairs. Rainer was leaning against the lintel, and as the door opened the light from the hall flashed on his pale face and fixed eyes. Faxon caught him by the arm and drew him in.

“It _was_ cold out there,” he sighed; and then, abruptly, as if invisible shears at a single stroke had cut every muscle in his body, he swerved, drooped on Faxon’s arm, and seemed to sink into nothing at his feet.

The lodge-keeper and Faxon bent over him, and somehow, between them, lifted him into the kitchen and laid him on a sofa by the stove.

The lodge-keeper, stammering: “I’ll ring up the house,” dashed out of the room. But Faxon heard the words without heeding them: omens mattered nothing now, beside this woe fulfilled. He knelt down to undo

the fur collar about Rainer's throat, and as he did so he felt a warm moisture on his hands. He held them up, and they were red....

V

The palms threaded their endless line along the yellow river. The little steamer lay at the wharf, and George Faxon, sitting in the veranda of the wooden hotel, idly watched the coolies carrying the freight across the gang-plank.

He had been looking at such scenes for two months. Nearly five had elapsed since he had descended from the train at Northridge and strained his eyes for the sleigh that was to take him to Weymore: Weymore, which he was never to behold!... Part of the interval—the first part—was still a great gray blur. Even now he could not be quite sure how he had got back to Boston, reached the house of a cousin, and been thence transferred to a quiet room looking out on snow under bare trees. He looked out a long time at the same scene, and finally one day a man he had known at Harvard came to see him and invited him to go out on a business trip to the Malay Peninsula.

"You've had a bad shake-up, and it'll do you no end of good to get away from things."

When the doctor came the next day it turned out that he knew of the plan and approved it. "You ought to be quiet for a year. Just loaf and look at the landscape," he advised.

Faxon felt the first faint stirrings of curiosity.

"What's been the matter with me, anyhow?"

"Well, over-work, I suppose. You must have been bottling up for a bad breakdown before you started for New Hampshire last December. And the shock of that poor boy's death did the rest."

Ah, yes—Rainer had died. He remembered....

He started for the East, and gradually, by imperceptible degrees, life crept back into his weary bones and leaden brain. His friend was very considerate and forbearing, and they travelled slowly and talked little. At first Faxon had felt a great shrinking from whatever touched on familiar things. He seldom looked at a newspaper, he never opened a letter without a moment's contraction of the heart. It was not that he had any special cause for apprehension, but merely that a great trail of darkness lay on everything. He had looked too deep down into the abyss.... But little by little health and energy returned to him, and with them the common promptings of curiosity. He was beginning to

wonder how the world was going, and when, presently, the hotel-keeper told him there were no letters for him in the steamer's mail-bag, he felt a distinct sense of disappointment. His friend had gone into the jungle on a long excursion, and he was lonely, unoccupied, and wholesomely bored. He got up and strolled into the stuffy reading-room.

There he found a game of dominoes, a mutilated picture-puzzle, some copies of _Zion's Herald_, and a pile of New York and London newspapers.

He began to glance through the papers, and was disappointed to find that they were less recent than he had hoped. Evidently the last numbers had been carried off by luckier travellers. He continued to turn them over, picking out the American ones first. These, as it happened, were the oldest: they dated back to December and January. To Faxon, however, they had all the flavor of novelty, since they covered the precise period during which he had virtually ceased to exist. It had never before occurred to him to wonder what had happened in the world during that interval of obliteration; but now he felt a sudden desire to know.

To prolong the pleasure, he began by sorting the papers chronologically, and as he found and spread out the earliest number, the date at the top of the page entered into his consciousness like a key slipping into a lock. It was the seventeenth of December: the date of the day after his arrival at Northridge. He glanced at the first page and read in blazing characters: "Reported Failure of Opal Cement Company. Lavington's Name Involved. Gigantic Exposure of Corruption Shakes Wall Street to Its Foundations."

He read on, and when he had finished the first paper he turned to the next. There was a gap of three days, but the Opal Cement "Investigation" still held the centre of the stage. From its complex revelations of greed and ruin his eye wandered to the death notices, and he read: "Rainer. Suddenly, at Northridge, New Hampshire, Francis John, only son of the late...."

His eyes clouded, and he dropped the newspaper and sat for a long time with his face in his hands. When he looked up again he noticed that his gesture had pushed the other papers from the table and scattered them on the floor at his feet. The uppermost lay spread out before him, and heavily his eyes began their search again. "John Lavington comes forward with plan for reconstructing Company. Offers to put in ten millions of his own—The proposal under consideration by the District Attorney."

Ten millions ... ten millions of his own. But if John Lavington was ruined?... Faxon stood up with a cry. That was it, then—that was what the warning meant! And if he had not fled from it, dashed wildly away from it into the night, he might have broken the spell of iniquity, the

powers of darkness might not have prevailed! He caught up the pile of newspapers and began to glance through each in turn for the headline: “Wills Admitted to Probate.” In the last of all he found the paragraph he sought, and it stared up at him as if with Rainer’s dying eyes.

That—_that_ was what he had done! The powers of pity had singled him out to warn and save, and he had closed his ears to their call, had washed his hands of it, and fled. Washed his hands of it! That was the word. It caught him back to the dreadful moment in the lodge when, raising himself up from Rainer’s side, he had looked at his hands and seen that they were red....

A LICKPENNY LOVER

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *The Voice of the City*, by O. Henry

There, were 3,000 girls in the Biggest Store. Masie was one of them. She was eighteen and a saleslady in the gents' gloves.

Here she became versed in two varieties of human beings—the kind of gents who buy their gloves in department stores and the kind of women who buy gloves for unfortunate gents. Besides this wide knowledge of the human species, Masie had acquired other information. She had listened to the promulgated wisdom of the 2,999 other girls and had stored it in a brain that was as secretive and wary as that of a Maltese cat. Perhaps nature, foreseeing that she would lack wise counsellors, had mingled the saving ingredient of shrewdness along with her beauty, as she has endowed the silver fox of the priceless fur above the other animals with cunning.

For Masie was beautiful. She was a deep-tinted blonde, with the calm poise of a lady who cooks butter cakes in a window. She stood behind her counter in the Biggest Store; and as you closed your hand over the tape-line for your glove measure you thought of Hebe; and as you looked again you wondered how she had come by Minerva's eyes.

When the floorwalker was not looking Masie chewed tutti frutti; when he was looking she gazed up as if at the clouds and smiled wistfully.

That is the shopgirl smile, and I enjoin you to shun it unless you are well fortified with callosity of the heart, caramels and a congeniality for the capers of Cupid. This smile belonged to Masie's recreation hours and not to the store; but the floorwalker must have his own. He is the Shylock of the stores. When he comes nosing around the bridge of his nose is a toll-bridge. It is goo-goo eyes or "git" when he looks toward a pretty girl. Of course not all floorwalkers are thus. Only a few days ago the papers printed news of one over eighty years of age.

One day Irving Carter, painter, millionaire, traveller, poet, automobilist, happened to enter the Biggest Store. It is due to him to add that his visit was not voluntary. Filial duty took him by the collar and dragged him inside, while his mother philandered among the bronze and terra-cotta statuettes.

Carter strolled across to the glove counter in order to shoot a few minutes on the wing. His need for gloves was genuine; he had forgotten to bring a pair with him. But his action hardly calls for apology, because he had never heard of glove-counter flirtations.

As he neared the vicinity of his fate he hesitated, suddenly conscious of this unknown phase of Cupid's less worthy profession.

Three or four cheap fellows, sonorously garbed, were leaning over the counters, wrestling with the mediatorial hand-coverings, while giggling girls played vivacious seconds to their lead upon the strident string of coquetry. Carter would have retreated, but he had gone too far. Masie confronted him behind her counter with a questioning look in eyes as coldly, beautifully, warmly blue as the glint of summer sunshine on an iceberg drifting in Southern seas.

And then Irving Carter, painter, millionaire, etc., felt a warm flush rise to his aristocratically pale face. But not from diffidence. The blush was intellectual in origin. He knew in a moment that he stood in the ranks of the ready-made youths who wooed the giggling girls at other counters. Himself leaned against the oaken trysting place of a cockney Cupid with a desire in his heart for the favor of a glove salesgirl. He was no more than Bill and Jack and Mickey. And then he felt a sudden tolerance for them, and an elating, courageous contempt for the conventions upon which he had fed, and an unhesitating determination to have this perfect creature for his own.

When the gloves were paid for and wrapped Carter lingered for a moment. The dimples at the corners of Masie's damask mouth deepened. All gentlemen who bought gloves lingered in just that way. She curved an arm, showing like Psyche's through her shirt-waist sleeve, and rested an elbow upon the show-case edge.

Carter had never before encountered a situation of which he had not been perfect master. But now he stood far more awkward than Bill or Jack or Mickey. He had no chance of meeting this beautiful girl socially. His mind struggled to recall the nature and habits of shopgirls as he had read or heard of them. Somehow he had received the idea that they sometimes did not insist too strictly upon the regular channels of introduction. His heart beat loudly at the thought of proposing an unconventional meeting with this lovely and virginal being. But the tumult in his heart gave him courage.

After a few friendly and well-received remarks on general subjects, he laid his card by her hand on the counter.

"Will you please pardon me," he said, "if I seem too bold; but I earnestly hope you will allow me the pleasure of seeing you again. There is my name; I assure you that it is with the greatest respect that I ask the favor of becoming one of your fr—acquaintances. May I not hope for the privilege?"

Masie knew men—especially men who buy gloves. Without hesitation she looked him frankly and smilingly in the eyes, and said:

"Sure. I guess you're all right. I don't usually go out with strange gentlemen, though. It ain't quite ladylike. When should you want to see me again?"

"As soon as I may," said Carter. "If you would allow me to call at your home, I—"

Masie laughed musically. "Oh, gee, no!" she said, emphatically. "If you could see our flat once! There's five of us in three rooms. I'd just like to see ma's face if I was to bring a gentleman friend there!"

"Anywhere, then," said the enamored Carter, "that will be convenient to you."

"Say," suggested Masie, with a bright-idea look in her peach-blow face; "I guess Thursday night will about suit me. Suppose you come to the corner of Eighth Avenue and Forty-eighth Street at 7:30. I live right near the corner. But I've got to be back home by eleven. Ma never lets me stay out after eleven."

Carter promised gratefully to keep the tryst, and then hastened to his mother, who was looking about for him to ratify her purchase of a bronze Diana.

A salesgirl, with small eyes and an obtuse nose, strolled near Masie, with a friendly leer.

"Did you make a hit with his nobs, Mase?" she asked, familiarly.

"The gentleman asked permission to call," answered Masie, with the grand air, as she slipped Carter's card into the bosom of her waist.

"Permission to call!" echoed small eyes, with a snigger. "Did he say anything about dinner in the Waldorf and a spin in his auto afterward?"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Masie, wearily. "You've been used to swell things, I don't think. You've had a swelled head ever since that hose-cart driver took you out to a chop suey joint. No, he never mentioned the Waldorf; but there's a Fifth Avenue address on his card, and if he buys the supper you can bet your life there won't be no pigtail on the waiter what takes the order."

As Carter glided away from the Biggest Store with his mother in his electric runabout, he bit his lip with a dull pain at his heart. He knew that love had come to him for the first time in all the twenty-nine years of his life. And that the object of it should make so readily an appointment with him at a street corner, though it was a step toward his desires, tortured him with misgivings.

Carter did not know the shopgirl. He did not know that her home is often either a scarcely habitable tiny room or a domicile filled to overflowing with kith and kin. The street-corner is her parlor, the park is her drawing-room; the avenue is her garden walk; yet for the most part she is as inviolate mistress of herself in them as is my lady inside her tapestried chamber.

One evening at dusk, two weeks after their first meeting, Carter and Masie strolled arm-in-arm into a little, dimly-lit park. They found a bench, tree-shadowed and secluded, and sat there.

For the first time his arm stole gently around her. Her golden-bronze head slid restfully against his shoulder.

"Gee!" sighed Masie, thankfully. "Why didn't you ever think of that before?"

"Masie," said Carter, earnestly, "you surely know that I love you. I ask you sincerely to marry me. You know me well enough by this time to have no doubts of me. I want you, and I must have you. I care nothing for the difference in our stations."

"What is the difference?" asked Masie, curiously.

"Well, there isn't any," said Carter, quickly, "except in the minds of foolish people. It is in my power to give you a life of luxury. My social position is beyond dispute, and my means are ample."

"They all say that," remarked Masie. "It's the kid they all give you. I suppose you really work in a delicatessen or follow the races. I ain't as green as I look."

"I can furnish you all the proofs you want," said Carter, gently. "And I want you, Masie. I loved you the first day I saw you."

"They all do," said Masie, with an amused laugh, "to hear 'em talk. If I could meet a man that got stuck on me the third time he'd seen me I think I'd get mashed on him."

"Please don't say such things," pleaded Carter. "Listen to me, dear. Ever since I first looked into your eyes you have been the only woman in the world for me."

"Oh, ain't you the kidder!" smiled Masie. "How many other girls did you ever tell that?"

But Carter persisted. And at length he reached the flimsy, fluttering little soul of the shopgirl that existed somewhere deep down in her lovely bosom. His words penetrated the heart whose very lightness was its safest armor. She looked up at him with eyes that saw. And a warm glow visited her cool cheeks. Tremblingly, awfully, her moth wings closed, and she seemed about to settle upon the flower of love. Some faint glimmer of life and its possibilities on the other side of her glove counter dawned upon her. Carter felt the change and crowded the opportunity.

"Marry me, Masie," he whispered softly, "and we will go away from this ugly city to beautiful ones. We will forget work and business, and life will be one long holiday. I know where I should take you—I have been there often. Just think of a shore where summer is eternal, where the waves are always rippling on the lovely beach and the people are happy and free as children. We will sail to those shores and remain there as long as you please. In one of those far-away cities there are grand and lovely palaces and towers full of beautiful pictures and statues. The streets of the city are water, and one travels about in—"

"I know," said Masie, sitting up suddenly. "Gondolas."

"Yes," smiled Carter.

"I thought so," said Masie.

"And then," continued Carter, "we will travel on and see whatever we wish in the world. After the European cities we will visit India and the ancient cities there, and ride on elephants and see the wonderful temples of the Hindoos and Brahmins and the Japanese gardens and the camel trains and chariot races in Persia, and all the queer sights of foreign countries. Don't you think you would like it, Masie?"

Masie rose to her feet.

"I think we had better be going home," she said, coolly. "It's getting late."

Carter humored her. He had come to know her varying, thistle-down moods, and that it was useless to combat them. But he felt a certain happy triumph. He had held for a moment, though but by a silken thread, the soul of his wild Psyche, and hope was stronger within him. Once she had folded her wings and her cool hand had closed about his own.

At the Biggest Store the next day Masie's chum, Lulu, waylaid her in an angle of the counter.

"How are you and your swell friend making it? she asked.

"Oh, him?" said Masie, patting her side curls. "He ain't in it any more. Say, Lu, what do you think that fellow wanted me to do?"

"Go on the stage?" guessed Lulu, breathlessly.

"Nit; he's too cheap a guy for that. He wanted me to marry him and go down to Coney Island for a wedding tour!"

TONY'S WIFE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Goodness of St. Rocque and Other Stories,* by Alice Dunbar

"Gimme fi' cents worth o' candy, please." It was the little Jew girl who spoke, and Tony's wife roused herself from her knitting to rise and count out the multi-hued candy which should go in exchange for the dingy nickel grasped in warm, damp fingers. Three long sticks, carefully wrapped in crispest brown paper, and a half dozen or more of pink candy fish for lagniappe, and the little Jew girl sped away in blissful contentment. Tony's wife resumed her knitting with a stifled sigh until the next customer should come.

A low growl caused her to look up apprehensively. Tony himself stood beetle-browed and huge in the small doorway.

"Get up from there," he muttered, "and open two dozen oysters right away; the Eliots want 'em." His English was unaccented. It was long since he had seen Italy.

She moved meekly behind the counter, and began work on the thick shells. Tony stretched his long neck up the street.

"Mr. Tony, mama wants some charcoal." The very small voice at his feet must have pleased him, for his black brows relaxed into a smile, and he poked the little one's chin with a hard, dirty finger, as he emptied the ridiculously small bucket of charcoal into the child's bucket, and gave a banana for lagniappe.

The crackling of shells went on behind, and a stifled sob arose as a bit of sharp edge cut into the thin, worn fingers that clasped the knife.

"Hurry up there, will you?" growled the black brows; "the Eliots are sending for the oysters."

She deftly strained and counted them, and, after wiping her fingers, resumed her seat, and took up the endless crochet work, with her usual stifled sigh.

Tony and his wife had always been in this same little queer old shop on Prytania Street, at least to the memory of the oldest inhabitant in the neighbourhood. When or how they came, or how they stayed, no one knew; it was enough that they were there, like a sort of ancestral fixture to the street. The neighbourhood was fine enough to look down upon these two tumble-down shops at the corner, kept by Tony and Mrs. Murphy, the grocer. It was a semi-fashionable locality, far up-town, away from the old-time French quarter. It was the sort of neighbourhood where millionaires live before their fortunes are made and fashionable, high-priced private schools flourish, where the small cottages are occupied by aspiring school-teachers and choir-singers. Such was this locality, and you must admit that it was indeed a condescension to tolerate Tony and Mrs. Murphy.

He was a great, black-bearded, hoarse-voiced, six-foot specimen of Italian humanity, who looked in his little shop and on the prosaic pavement of Prytania Street somewhat as Hercules might seem in a modern drawing-room. You instinctively thought of wild mountain-passes, and the gleaming dirks of bandit contadini in looking at him. What his last name was, no one knew. Someone had maintained once that he had been christened Antonio Malatesta, but that was unauthentic, and as little to be believed as that other wild theory that her name was Mary.

She was meek, pale, little, ugly, and German. Altogether part of his arms and legs would have very decently made another larger than she. Her hair was pale and drawn in sleek, thin tightness away from a pinched, pitiful face, whose dull cold eyes hurt you, because you knew they were trying to mirror sorrow, and could not because of their

expressionless quality. No matter what the weather or what her other toilet, she always wore a thin little shawl of dingy brick-dust hue about her shoulders. No matter what the occasion or what the day, she always carried her knitting with her, and seldom ceased the incessant twist, twist of the shining steel among the white cotton meshes. She might put down the needles and lace into the spool-box long enough to open oysters, or wrap up fruit and candy, or count out wood and coal into infinitesimal portions, or do her housework; but the knitting was snatched with avidity at the first spare moment, and the worn, white, blue-marked fingers, half enclosed in kid-glove stalls for protection, would writhe and twist in and out again. Little girls just learning to crochet borrowed their patterns from Tony's wife, and it was considered quite a mark of advancement to have her inspect a bit of lace done by eager, chubby fingers. The ladies in larger houses, whose husbands would be millionaires some day, bought her lace, and gave it to their servants for Christmas presents.

As for Tony, when she was slow in opening his oysters or in cooking his red beans and spaghetti, he roared at her, and prefixed picturesque adjectives to her lace, which made her hide it under her apron with a fearsome look in her dull eyes.

He hated her in a lusty, roaring fashion, as a healthy beefy boy hates a sick cat and torments it to madness. When she displeased him, he beat her, and knocked her frail form on the floor. The children could tell when this had happened. Her eyes would be red, and there would be blue marks on her face and neck. "Poor Mrs. Tony," they would say, and nestle close to her. Tony did not roar at her for petting them, perhaps, because they spent money on the multi-hued candy in glass jars on the shelves.

Her mother appeared upon the scene once, and stayed a short time; but Tony got drunk one day and beat her because she ate too much, and she disappeared soon after. Whence she came and where she departed, no one could tell, not even Mrs. Murphy, the Pauline Pry and Gazette of the block.

Tony had gout, and suffered for many days in roaring helplessness, the while his foot, bound and swathed in many folds of red flannel, lay on the chair before him. In proportion as his gout increased and he bawled from pure physical discomfort, she became light-hearted, and moved about the shop with real, brisk cheeriness. He could not hit her then without such pain that after one or two trials he gave up in disgust.

So the dull years had passed, and life had gone on pretty much the same for Tony and the German wife and the shop. The children came on Sunday evenings to buy the stick candy, and on week-days for coal and wood. The servants came to buy oysters for the larger houses, and to gossip over the counter about their employers. The little dry woman knitted, and the big man moved lazily in and out in his red flannel shirt, exchanged politics with the tailor next door through the window, or lounged into Mrs. Murphy's bar and drank fiercely. Some of the children grew up and moved away, and other little girls came to buy candy and eat pink lagniappe fishes, and the shop still thrived.

One day Tony was ill, more than the mummied foot of gout, or the wheeze of asthma; he must keep his bed and send for the doctor.

She clutched his arm when he came, and pulled him into the tiny room.

"Is it—is it anything much, doctor?" she gasped.

AEsculapius shook his head as wisely as the occasion would permit. She followed him out of the room into the shop.

"Do you—will he get well, doctor?"

AEsculapius buttoned up his frock coat, smoothed his shining hat, cleared his throat, then replied oracularly,

"Madam, he is completely burned out inside. Empty as a shell, madam, empty as a shell. He cannot live, for he has nothing to live on."

As the cobblestones rattled under the doctor's equipage rolling leisurely up Prytania Street, Tony's wife sat in her chair and laughed,—laughed with a hearty joyousness that lifted the film from the dull eyes and disclosed a sparkle beneath.

The drear days went by, and Tony lay like a veritable Samson shorn of his strength, for his voice was sunken to a hoarse, sibilant whisper, and his black eyes gazed fiercely from the shock of hair and beard about a white face. Life went on pretty much as before in the shop; the children paused to ask how Mr. Tony was, and even hushed the jingles on their bell hoops as they passed the door. Red-headed Jimmie, Mrs. Murphy's nephew, did the hard jobs, such as splitting wood and lifting coal from the bin; and in the intervals between tending the fallen giant and waiting on the customers, Tony's wife sat in her accustomed chair, knitting fiercely, with an inscrutable smile about her purple compressed mouth.

Then John came, introducing himself, serpent-wise, into the Eden of her bosom.

John was Tony's brother, huge and bluff too, but fair and blond, with the beauty of Northern Italy. With the same lack of race pride which Tony had displayed in selecting his German spouse, John had taken unto himself Betty, a daughter of Erin, aggressive, powerful, and cross-eyed. He turned up now, having heard of this illness, and assumed an air of remarkable authority at once.

A hunted look stole into the dull eyes, and after John had departed with blustering directions as to Tony's welfare, she crept to his bedside timidly.

"Tony," she said,—"Tony, you are very sick."

An inarticulate growl was the only response.

"Tony, you ought to see the priest; you mustn't go any longer without taking the sacrament."

The growl deepened into words.

"Don't want any priest; you 're always after some snivelling old woman's fuss. You and Mrs. Murphy go on with your church; it won't make YOU any better."

She shivered under this parting shot, and crept back into the shop. Still the priest came next day.

She followed him in to the bedside and knelt timidly.

"Tony," she whispered, "here's Father Leblanc."

Tony was too languid to curse out loud; he only expressed his hate in a toss of the black beard and shaggy mane.

"Tony," she said nervously, "won't you do it now? It won't take long, and it will be better for you when you go—Oh, Tony, don't—don't laugh. Please, Tony, here's the priest."

But the Titan roared aloud: "No; get out. Think I'm a-going to give you a chance to grab my money now? Let me die and go to hell in peace."

Father Leblanc knelt meekly and prayed, and the woman's weak pleadings continued,—

"Tony, I've been true and good and faithful to you. Don't die and leave me no better than before. Tony, I do want to be a good woman once, a real-for-true married woman. Tony, here's the priest; say yes." And she wrung

her ringless hands.

"You want my money," said Tony, slowly, "and you sha'n't have it, not a cent; John shall have it."

Father Leblanc shrank away like a fading spectre. He came next day and next day, only to see re-enacted the same piteous scene,—the woman pleading to be made a wife ere death hushed Tony's blasphemies, the man chuckling in pain-racked glee at the prospect of her bereaved misery. Not all the prayers of Father Leblanc nor the wailings of Mrs. Murphy could alter the determination of the will beneath the shock of hair; he gloated in his physical weakness at the tenacious grasp on his mentality.

"Tony," she wailed on the last day, her voice rising to a shriek in its eagerness, "tell them I'm your wife; it'll be the same. Only say it, Tony, before you die!"

He raised his head, and turned stiff eyes and gibbering mouth on her; then, with one chill finger pointing at John, fell back dully and heavily.

They buried him with many honours by the Society of Italia's Sons. John took possession of the shop when they returned home, and found the money hidden in the chimney corner.

As for Tony's wife, since she was not his wife after all, they sent her forth in the world penniless, her worn fingers clutching her bundle of clothes in nervous agitation, as though they regretted the time lost from knitting.

THE BRIDE COMES TO YELLOW SKY

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *The Open Boat and Other Stories*, by Stephen Crane

I

The great Pullman was whirling onward with such dignity of motion that a glance from the window seemed simply to prove that the plains of Texas were pouring eastward. Vast flats of green grass, dull-hued spaces of mesquit and cactus, little groups of frame houses, woods of light and tender trees, all were sweeping into the east, sweeping over the horizon, a precipice.

A newly-married pair had boarded this train at San Antonio. The man's face was reddened from many days in the wind and sun, and a direct result of his new black clothes was that his brick-coloured hands were constantly performing in a most conscious fashion. From time to time he looked down respectfully at his attire. He sat with a hand on each knee, like a man waiting in a barber's shop. The glances he devoted to other passengers were furtive and shy.

The bride was not pretty, nor was she very young. She wore a dress of blue cashmere, with small reservations of velvet here and there, and with steel buttons abounding. She continually twisted her head to regard her puff-sleeves, very stiff, straight, and high. They embarrassed her. It was quite apparent that she had cooked, and that she expected to cook, dutifully. The blushes caused by the careless

scrutiny of some passengers as she had entered the car were strange to see upon this plain, under-class countenance, which was drawn in placid, almost emotionless lines.

They were evidently very happy. "Ever been in a parlour-car before?" he asked, smiling with delight.

"No," she answered; "I never was. It's fine, ain't it?"

"Great. And then, after a while, we'll go forward to the diner, and get a big lay-out. Finest meal in the world. Charge, a dollar."

"Oh, do they?" cried the bride. "Charge a dollar? Why, that's too much--for us--ain't it, Jack?"

"Not this trip, anyhow," he answered bravely. "We're going to go the whole thing."

Later, he explained to her about the train. "You see, it's a thousand miles from one end of Texas to the other, and this train runs right across it, and never stops but four times."

He had the pride of an owner. He pointed out to her the dazzling fittings of the coach, and, in truth, her eyes opened wider as she contemplated the sea-green figured velvet, the shining brass, silver, and glass, the wood that gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a pool of oil. At one end a bronze figure sturdily held a support for a separated chamber, and at convenient places on the ceiling were frescoes in olive and silver.

To the minds of the pair, their surroundings reflected the glory of their marriage that morning in San Antonio. This was the environment of their new estate, and the man's face, in particular, beamed with an elation that made him appear ridiculous to the negro porter. This individual at times surveyed them from afar with an amused and superior grin. On other occasions he bullied them with skill in ways that did not make it exactly plain to them that they were being bullied. He subtly used all the manners of the most unconquerable kind of snobbery. He oppressed them, but of this oppression they had small knowledge, and they speedily forgot that unfrequently a number of travellers covered them with stares of derisive enjoyment. Historically there was supposed to be something infinitely humorous in their situation.

"We are due in Yellow Sky at 3.42," he said, looking tenderly into her eyes.

"Oh, are we?" she said, as if she had not been aware of it.

To evince surprise at her husband's statement was part of her wifely

amiability. She took from a pocket a little silver watch, and as she held it before her, and stared at it with a frown of attention, the new husband's face shone.

"I bought it in San Anton' from a friend of mine," he told her gleefully.

"It's seventeen minutes past twelve," she said, looking up at him with a kind of shy and clumsy coquetry.

A passenger, noting this play, grew excessively sardonic, and winked at himself in one of the numerous mirrors.

At last they went to the dining-car. Two rows of negro waiters in dazzling white suits surveyed their entrance with the interest, and also the equanimity, of men who had been forewarned. The pair fell to the lot of a waiter who happened to feel pleasure in steering them through their meal. He viewed them with the manner of a fatherly pilot, his countenance radiant with benevolence. The patronage entwined with the ordinary deference was not palpable to them. And yet as they returned to their coach they showed in their faces a sense of escape.

To the left, miles down a long purple slope, was a little ribbon of mist, where moved the keening Rio Grande. The train was approaching it at an angle, and the apex was Yellow Sky. Presently it was apparent that as the distance from Yellow Sky grew shorter, the husband became commensurately restless. His brick-red hands were more insistent in their prominence. Occasionally he was even rather absent-minded and far away when the bride leaned forward and addressed him.

As a matter of truth, Jack Potter was beginning to find the shadow of a deed weigh upon him like a leaden slab. He, the town-marshal of Yellow Sky, a man known, liked, and feared in his corner, a prominent person, had gone to San Antonio to meet a girl he believed he loved, and there, after the usual prayers, had actually induced her to marry him without consulting Yellow Sky for any part of the transaction. He was now bringing his bride before an innocent and unsuspecting community.

Of course, people in Yellow Sky married as it pleased them in accordance with a general custom, but such was Potter's thought of his duty to his friends, or of their idea of his duty, or of an unspoken form which does not control men in these matters, that he felt he was heinous. He had committed an extraordinary crime. Face to face with this girl in San Antonio, and spurred by his sharp impulse, he had gone headlong over all the social hedges. At San Antonio he was like a man hidden in the dark. A knife to sever any friendly duty, any form, was easy to his hand in that remote city. But the hour of Yellow Sky, the hour of daylight, was approaching.

He knew full well that his marriage was an important thing to his town. It could only be exceeded by the burning of the new hotel. His friends would not forgive him. Frequently he had reflected upon the advisability of telling them by telegraph, but a new cowardice had been upon him. He feared to do it. And now the train was hurrying him toward a scene of amazement, glee, reproach. He glanced out of the window at the line of haze swinging slowly in toward the train.

Yellow Sky had a kind of brass band which played painfully to the delight of the populace. He laughed without heart as he thought of it. If the citizens could dream of his prospective arrival with his bride, they would parade the band at the station, and escort them, amid cheers and laughing congratulations, to his adobe home.

He resolved that he would use all the devices of speed and plainscraft in making the journey from the station to his house. Once within that safe citadel, he could issue some sort of a vocal bulletin, and then not go among the citizens until they had time to wear off a little of their enthusiasm.

The bride looked anxiously at him. "What's worrying you, Jack?"

He laughed again. "I'm not worrying, girl. I'm only thinking of Yellow Sky."

She flushed in comprehension.

A sense of mutual guilt invaded their minds, and developed a finer tenderness. They looked at each other with eyes softly aglow. But Potter often laughed the same nervous laugh. The flush upon the bride's face seemed quite permanent.

The traitor to the feelings of Yellow Sky narrowly watched the speeding landscape.

"We're nearly there," he said.

Presently the porter came and announced the proximity of Potter's home. He held a brush in his hand, and, with all his airy superiority gone, he brushed Potter's new clothes, as the latter slowly turned this way and that way. Potter fumbled out a coin, and gave it to the porter as he had seen others do. It was a heavy and muscle-bound business, as that of a man shoeing his first horse.

The porter took their bag, and, as the train began to slow, they moved forward to the hooded platform of the car. Presently the two engines and their long string of coaches rushed into the station of Yellow Sky.

"They have to take water here," said Potter, from a constricted throat,

and in mournful cadence as one announcing death. Before the train stopped his eye had swept the length of the platform, and he was glad and astonished to see there was no one upon it but the station-agent, who, with a slightly hurried and anxious air, was walking toward the water-tanks. When the train had halted, the porter alighted first and placed in position a little temporary step.

"Come on, girl," said Potter, hoarsely.

As he helped her down, they each laughed on a false note. He took the bag from the negro, and bade his wife cling to his arm. As they slunk rapidly away, his hang-dog glance perceived that they were unloading the two trunks, and also that the station-agent, far ahead, near the baggage-car, had turned, and was running toward him, making gestures. He laughed, and groaned as he laughed, when he noted the first effect of his marital bliss upon Yellow Sky. He gripped his wife's arm firmly to his side, and they fled. Behind them the porter stood chuckling fatuously.

II

The California Express on the Southron Railway was due at Yellow Sky in twenty-one minutes. There were six men at the bar of the Weary Gentleman saloon. One was a drummer, who talked a great deal and rapidly; three were Texans, who did not care to talk at that time; and two were Mexican sheep-herders, who did not talk as a general practice in the Weary Gentleman saloon. The bar-keeper's dog lay on the board-walk that crossed in front of the door. His head was on his paws, and he glanced drowsily here and there with the constant vigilance of a dog that is kicked on occasion. Across the sandy street were some vivid green grass plots, so wonderful in appearance amid the sands that burned near them in a blazing sun, that they caused a doubt in the mind. They exactly resembled the grass-mats used to represent lawns on the stage. At the cooler end of the railway-station a man without a coat sat in a tilted chair and smoked his pipe. The fresh-cut bank of the Rio Grande circled near the town, and there could be seen beyond it a great plum-coloured plain of mesquit.

Save for the busy drummer and his companions in the saloon, Yellow Sky was dozing. The new-comer leaned gracefully upon the bar, and recited many tales with the confidence of a bard who has come upon a new field.

"And at the moment that the old man fell down-stairs, with the bureau in his arms, the old woman was coming up with two scuttles of coal, and, of course----"

The drummer's tale was interrupted by a young man who suddenly appeared in the open door. He cried--

"Scratchy Wilson's drunk, and has turned loose with both hands."

The two Mexicans at once set down their glasses, and faded out of the rear entrance of the saloon.

The drummer, innocent and jocular, answered--

"All right, old man. S'pose he has. Come and have a drink, anyhow."

But the information had made such an obvious cleft in every skull in the room, that the drummer was obliged to see its importance. All had become instantly morose.

"Say," said he, mystified, "what is this?"

His three companions made the introductory gesture of eloquent speech, but the young man at the door forestalled them.

"It means, my friend," he answered, as he came into the saloon, "that for the next two hours this town won't be a health resort."

The bar-keeper went to the door, and locked and barred it. Reaching out of the window, he pulled in heavy wooden shutters and barred them. Immediately a solemn, chapel-like gloom was upon the place. The drummer was looking from one to another.

"But say," he cried, "what is this, anyhow? You don't mean there is going to be a gun-fight?"

"Don't know whether there'll be a fight or not," answered one man grimly. "But there'll be some shootin'--some good shootin'."

The young man who had warned them waved his hand. "Oh, there'll be a fight, fast enough, if any one wants it. Anybody can get a fight out there in the street. There's a fight just waiting."

The drummer seemed to be swayed between the interest of a foreigner, and a perception of personal danger.

"What did you say his name was?" he asked.

"Scratchy Wilson," they answered in chorus.

"And will he kill anybody? What are you going to do? Does this happen often? Does he rampage round like this once a week or so? Can he break in that door?"

"No, he can't break down that door," replied the bar-keeper. "He's

tried it three times. But when he comes you'd better lay down on the floor, stranger. He's dead sure to shoot at it, and a bullet may come through."

Thereafter the drummer kept a strict eye on the door. The time had not yet been called for him to hug the floor, but as a minor precaution he sidled near to the wall.

"Will he kill anybody?" he said again.

The men laughed low and scornfully at the question.

"He's out to shoot, and he's out for trouble. Don't see any good in experimentin' with him."

"But what do you do in a case like this? What do you do?"

A man responded--"Why, he and Jack Potter----"

But, in chorus, the other men interrupted--"Jack Potter's in San Anton'."

"Well, who is he? What's he got to do with it?"

"Oh, he's the town-marshal. He goes out and fights Scratchy when he gets on one of these tears."

"Whow!" said the drummer, mopping his brow. "Nice job he's got."

The voices had toned away to mere whisperings. The drummer wished to ask further questions, which were born of an increasing anxiety and bewilderment, but when he attempted them, the men merely looked at him in irritation, and motioned him to remain silent. A tense waiting hush was upon them. In the deep shadows of the room their eyes shone as they listened for sounds from the street. One man made three gestures at the bar-keeper, and the latter, moving like a ghost, handed him a glass and a bottle. The man poured a full glass of whisky, and set down the bottle noiselessly. He gulped the whisky in a swallow, and turned again toward the door in immovable silence. The drummer saw that the bar-keeper, without a sound, had taken a Winchester from beneath the bar. Later, he saw this individual beckoning to him, so he tip-toed across the room.

"You better come with me back of the bar."

"No, thanks," said the drummer, perspiring. "I'd rather be where I can make a break for the back-door."

Whereupon the man of bottles made a kindly but peremptory gesture.

The drummer obeyed it, and finding himself seated on a box, with his head below the level of the bar, balm was laid upon his soul at sight of various zinc and copper fittings that bore a resemblance to plate armour. The bar-keeper took a seat comfortably upon an adjacent box.

"You see," he whispered, "this here Scratchy Wilson is a wonder with a gun--a perfect wonder--and when he goes on the war-trail, we hunt our holes--naturally. He's about the last one of the old gang that used to hang out along the river here. He's a terror when he's drunk. When he's sober he's all right--kind of simple--wouldn't hurt a fly--nicest fellow in town. But when he's drunk--whoo!"

There were periods of stillness.

"I wish Jack Potter was back from San Anton'," said the bar-keeper. "He shot Wilson up once--in the leg--and he would sail in and pull out the kinks in this thing."

Presently they heard from a distance the sound of a shot, followed by three wild yells. It instantly removed a bond from the men in the darkened saloon. There was a shuffling of feet. They looked at each other.

"Here he comes," they said.

III

A man in a maroon-coloured flannel shirt, which had been purchased for purposes of decoration, and made, principally, by some Jewish women on the east side of New York, rounded a corner and walked into the middle of the main street of Yellow Sky. In either hand the man held a long, heavy blue-black revolver. Often he yelled, and these cries rang through a semblance of a deserted village, shrilly flying over the roofs in a volume that seemed to have no relation to the ordinary vocal strength of a man. It was as if the surrounding stillness formed the arch of a tomb over him. These cries of ferocious challenge rang against walls of silence. And his boots had red tops with gilded imprints, of the kind beloved in winter by little sledging boys on the hillsides of New England.

The man's face flamed in a rage begot of whisky. His eyes, rolling and yet keen for ambush, hunted the still door-ways and windows. He walked with the creeping movement of the midnight cat. As it occurred to him, he roared menacing information. The long revolvers in his hands were as easy as straws; they were moved with an electric swiftness. The little fingers of each hand played sometimes in a musician's way. Plain from the low collar of the shirt, the cords of his neck straightened and sank as passion moved him. The only sounds were his terrible

invitations. The calm adobes preserved their demeanour at the passing of this small thing in the middle of the street.

There was no offer of fight--no offer of fight. The man called to the sky. There were no attractions. He bellowed and fumed and swayed his revolver here and everywhere.

The dog of the bar-keeper of the Weary Gentleman saloon had not appreciated the advance of events. He yet lay dozing in front of his master's door. At sight of the dog, the man paused and raised his revolver humorously. At sight of the man, the dog sprang up and walked diagonally away, with a sullen head and growling. The man yelled, and the dog broke into a gallop. As it was about to enter an alley, there was a loud noise, a whistling, and something spat the ground directly before it. The dog screamed, and, wheeling in terror, galloped headlong in a new direction. Again there was a noise, a whistling, and sand was kicked viciously before it. Fear-stricken, the dog turned and flurried like an animal in a pen. The man stood laughing, his weapons at his hips.

Ultimately the man was attracted by the closed door of the Weary Gentleman saloon. He went to it, and, hammering with a revolver, demanded drink.

The door remaining imperturbable, he picked a bit of paper from the walk, and nailed it to the framework with a knife. He then turned his back contemptuously upon this popular resort, and, walking to the opposite side of the street and spinning there on his heel quickly and lithely, fired at the bit of paper. He missed it by a half-inch. He swore at himself, and went away. Later, he comfortably fusiladed the windows of his most intimate friend. The man was playing with this town. It was a toy for him.

But still there was no offer of fight. The name of Jack Potter, his ancient antagonist, entered his mind, and he concluded that it would be a glad thing if he should go to Potter's house, and, by bombardment, induce him to come out and fight. He moved in the direction of his desire, chanting Apache scalp music.

When he arrived at it, Potter's house presented the same still, calm front as had the other adobes. Taking up a strategic position, the man howled a challenge. But this house regarded him as might a great stone god. It gave no sign. After a decent wait, the man howled further challenges, mingling with them wonderful epithets.

Presently there came the spectacle of a man churning himself into deepest rage over the immobility of a house. He fumed at it as the winter wind attacks a prairie cabin in the north. To the distance there should have gone the sound of a tumult like the fighting of two hundred

Mexicans. As necessity bade him, he paused for breath or to reload his revolvers.

IV

Potter and his bride walked sheepishly and with speed. Sometimes they laughed together shamefacedly and low.

"Next corner, dear," he said finally.

They put forth the efforts of a pair walking bowed against a strong wind. Potter was about to raise a finger to point the first appearance of the new home, when, as they circled the corner, they came face to face with a man in a maroon-coloured shirt, who was feverishly pushing cartridges into a large revolver. Upon the instant the man dropped this revolver to the ground, and, like lightning, whipped another from its holster. The second weapon was aimed at the bridegroom's chest.

There was a silence. Potter's mouth seemed to be merely a grave for his tongue. He exhibited an instinct to at once loosen his arm from the woman's grip, and he dropped the bag to the sand. As for the bride, her face had gone as yellow as old cloth. She was a slave to hideous rites, gazing at the apparitional snake.

The two men faced each other at a distance of three paces. He of the revolver smiled with a new and quiet ferocity. "Tried to sneak up on me!" he said. "Tried to sneak up on me!" His eyes grew more baleful. As Potter made a slight movement, the man thrust his revolver venomously forward. "No; don't you do it, Jack Potter. Don't you move a finger towards a gun just yet. Don't you move an eyelash. The time has come for me to settle with you, and I'm going to do it my own way, and loaf along with no interferin'. So if you don't want a gun bent on you, just mind what I tell you."

Potter looked at his enemy. "I ain't got a gun on me, Scratchy," he said. "Honest, I ain't." He was stiffening and steadying, but yet somewhere at the back of his mind a vision of the Pullman floated--the sea-green figured velvet, the shining brass, silver, and glass, the wood that gleamed as darkly brilliant as the surface of a pool of oil--all the glory of their marriage, the environment of the new estate.

"You know I fight when it comes to fighting, Scratchy Wilson, but I ain't got a gun on me. You'll have to do all the shootin' yourself."

His enemy's face went livid. He stepped forward, and lashed his weapon to and fro before Potter's chest.

"Don't you tell me you ain't got no gun on you, you whelp. Don't tell

me no lie like that. There ain't a man in Texas ever seen you without no gun. Don't take me for no kid."

His eyes blazed with light and his throat worked like a pump.

"I ain't takin' you for no kid," answered Potter. His heels had not moved an inch backward. "I'm takin' you for a ---- fool. I tell you I ain't got a gun, and I ain't. If you're goin' to shoot me up, you'd better begin now. You'll never get a chance like this again."

So much enforced reasoning had told on Wilson's rage. He was calmer.

"If you ain't got a gun, why ain't you got a gun?" he sneered. "Been to Sunday school?"

"I ain't got a gun because I've just come from San Anton' with my wife. I'm married," said Potter. "And if I'd thought there was going to be any galoots like you prowling around when I brought my wife home, I'd had a gun, and don't you forget it."

"Married!" said Scratchy, not at all comprehending.

"Yes, married! I'm married," said Potter, distinctly.

"Married!" said Scratchy; seeming for the first time he saw the drooping drowning woman at the other man's side. "No!" he said. He was like a creature allowed a glimpse of another world. He moved a pace backward, and his arm with the revolver dropped to his side. "Is this--is this the lady?" he asked.

"Yes, this is the lady," answered Potter.

There was another period of silence.

"Well," said Wilson at last, slowly, "I s'pose it's all off now?"

"It's all off if you say so, Scratchy. You know I didn't make the trouble."

Potter lifted his valise.

"Well, I 'low it's off, Jack," said Wilson. He was looking at the ground. "Married!" He was not a student of chivalry; it was merely that in the presence of this foreign condition he was a simple child of the earlier plains. He picked up his starboard revolver, and placing both weapons in their holsters, he went away. His feet made funnel-shaped tracks in the heavy sand.

THE JELLY-BEAN.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Tales of the Jazz Age*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Jim Powell was a Jelly-bean. Much as I desire to make him an appealing character, I feel that it would be unscrupulous to deceive you on that point. He was a bred-in-the-bone, dyed-in-the-wool, ninety-nine three-quarters per cent Jelly-bean and he grew lazily all during Jelly-bean season, which is every season, down in the land of the Jelly-beans well below the Mason-Dixon line.

Now if you call a Memphis man a Jelly-bean he will quite possibly pull a long sinewy rope from his hip pocket and hang you to a convenient telegraph-pole. If you Call a New Orleans man a Jelly-bean he will probably grin and ask you who is taking your girl to the Mardi Gras ball. The particular Jelly-bean patch which produced the protagonist of this history lies somewhere between the two--a little city of forty thousand that has dozed sleepily for forty thousand years in southern Georgia occasionally stirring in its slumbers and muttering something about a war that took place sometime, somewhere, and that everyone else has forgotten long ago.

Jim was a Jelly-bean. I write that again because it has such a pleasant sound--rather like the beginning of a fairy story--as if Jim were nice. It somehow gives me a picture of him with a round, appetizing face and all sort of leaves and vegetables growing out of his cap. But Jim was long and thin and bent at the waist from stooping over pool-tables, and he was what might have been known in the indiscriminating North as a corner loafer. "Jelly-bean" is the name throughout the undissolved Confederacy for one who spends his life conjugating the verb to idle in the first person singular--I am idling, I have idled, I will idle.

Jim was born in a white house on a green corner, It had four weather-beaten pillars in front and a great amount of lattice-work in the rear that made a cheerful criss-cross background for a flowery sun-drenched lawn. Originally the dwellers in the white house had owned the ground next door and next door to that and next door to that, but this had been so long ago that even Jim's father, scarcely remembered it. He had, in fact, thought it a matter of so little moment that when he was dying from a pistol wound got in a brawl he neglected even to tell little Jim, who was five years old and miserably frightened. The white house became a boarding-house run by a tight-lipped lady from Macon, whom Jim called Aunt Mamie and detested with all his soul.

He became fifteen, went to high school, wore his hair in black snarls,

and was afraid of girls. He hated his home where four women and one old man prolonged an interminable chatter from summer to summer about what lots the Powell place had originally included and what sorts of flowers would be out next. Sometimes the parents of little girls in town, remembering Jim's. mother and fancying a resemblance in the dark eyes and hair, invited him to parties, but parties made him shy and he much preferred sitting on a disconnected axle in Tilly's Garage, rolling the bones or exploring his mouth endlessly with a long straw. For pocket money, he picked up odd jobs, and it was due to this that he stopped going to parties. At his third party little Marjorie Haight had whispered indiscreetly and within hearing distance that he was a boy who brought the groceries sometimes. So instead of the two-step and polka, Jim had learned to throw, any number he desired on the dice and had listened to spicy tales of all the shootings that had occurred in the surrounding country during the past fifty years.

He became eighteen. The war broke out and he enlisted as a gob and polished brass in the Charleston Navy-yard for a year. Then, by way of variety, he went North and polished brass in the Brooklyn Navy-yard for a year.

When the war was over he came home, He was twenty-one, has trousers were too short and too tight. His buttoned shoes were long and narrow. His tie was an alarming conspiracy of purple and pink marvellously scrolled, and over it were two blue eyes faded like a piece of very good old cloth, long exposed to the sun.

In the twilight of one April evening when a soft gray had drifted down along the cottonfields and over the sultry town, he was a vague figure leaning against a board fence, whistling and gazing at the moon's rim above the lights of Jackson Street. His mind was working persistently on a problem that had held his attention for an. The Jelly-bean had been invited to a party.

Back in the days when all the boys had detested all the girls, Clark Darrow and Jim had sat side by side in school. But, while Jim's social aspirations had died in the oily air of the garage, Clark had alternately fallen in and out of love, gone to college, taken to drink, given it up, and, in short, become one of the best beaux of the town. Nevertheless Clark and Jim had retained a friendship that, though casual, was perfectly definite. That afternoon Clark's ancient Ford had slowed up beside Jim, who was on the sidewalk and, out of a clear sky, Clark invited him to a party at the country club. The impulse that made him do this was no stranger than the impulse which made Jim accept. The latter was probably an unconscious ennui, a half-frightened sense of adventure. And now Jim was soberly thinking it over.

He began to sing, drumming his long foot idly on a stone block in the

sidewalk till it wobbled up and down in time to the low throaty tune:

"One smile from Home in Jelly-bean town,
Lives Jeanne, the Jelly-bean Queen.
She loves her dice and treats 'em nice;
No dice would treat her mean."

He broke off and agitated the sidewalk to a bumpy gallop.

"Daggone!" he muttered, half aloud. They would all be there--the old crowd, the crowd to which, by right of the white house, sold long since, and the portrait of the officer in gray over the mantel, Jim should have belonged. But that crowd had grown up together into a tight little set as gradually as the girls' dresses had lengthened inch by inch, as definitely as the boys' trousers had dropped suddenly to their ankles. And to that society of first names and dead puppy loves Jim was an outsider--a running mate of poor whites. Most of the men knew him, condescendingly; he tipped his hat to three or four girls. That was all.

When the dusk had thickened into a blue setting for the moon, he walked through the hot, pleasantly pungent town to Jackson Street. The stores were closing and the last shoppers were drifting homeward, as if borne on the dreamy revolution of a slow merry-go-round. A street-fair farther down a brilliant alley of varicolored booths and contributed a blend of music to the night--an oriental dance on a calliope, a melancholy bugle in front of a freak show, a cheerful rendition of "Back Home in Tennessee" on a hand-organ.

The Jelly-bean stopped in a store and bought a collar. Then he sauntered along toward Soda Sam's, where he found the usual three or four cars of a summer evening parked in front and the little darkies running back and forth with sundaes and lemonades.

"Hello, Jim."

It was a voice at his elbow--Joe Ewing sitting in an automobile with Marylyn Wade. Nancy Lamar and a strange man were in the back seat.

The Jelly-bean tipped his hat quickly.

"Hi Ben--" then, after an almost imperceptible pause--"How y' all?"

Passing, he ambled on toward the garage where he had a room up-stairs. His "How y'all" had been said to Nancy Lamar, to whom he had not spoken in fifteen years.

Nancy had a mouth like a remembered kiss and shadowy eyes and blue-black hair inherited from her mother who had been born in

Budapest. Jim passed her often on the street, walking small-boy fashion with her hands in her pockets and he knew that with her inseparable Sally Carrol Hopper she had left a trail of broken hearts from Atlanta to New Orleans.

For a few fleeting moments Jim wished he could dance. Then he laughed and as he reached his door began to sing softly to himself:

"Her Jelly Roll can twist your soul,
Her eyes are big and brown,
She's the Queen of the Queens of the Jelly-beans--
My Jeanne of Jelly-bean Town."

II

At nine-thirty, Jim and Clark met in front of Soda Sam's and started for the Country Club in Clark's Ford. "Jim," asked Clark casually, as they rattled through the jasmine-scented night, "how do you keep alive?"

The Jelly-bean paused, considered.

"Well," he said finally, "I got a room over Tilly's garage. I help him some with the cars in the afternoon an' he gives it to me free. Sometimes I drive one of his taxies and pick up a little thataway. I get fed up doin' that regular though."

"That all?"

"Well, when there's a lot of work I help him by the day--Saturdays usually--and then there's one main source of revenue I don't generally mention. Maybe you don't recollect I'm about the champion crap-shooter of this town. They make me shoot from a cup now because once I get the feel of a pair of dice they just roll for me."

Clark grinned appreciatively,

"I never could learn to set 'em so's they'd do what I wanted. Wish you'd shoot with Nancy Lamar some day and take all her money away from her. She will roll 'em with the boys and she loses more than her daddy can afford to give her. I happen to know she sold a good ring last month to pay a debt."

The Jelly-bean was noncommittal.

"The white house on Elm Street still belong to you?"

Jim shook his head.

"Sold. Got a pretty good price, seein' it wasn't in a good part of town no more. Lawyer told me to put it into Liberty bonds. But Aunt Mamie got so she didn't have no sense, so it takes all the interest to keep her up at Great Farms Sanitarium.

"Hm."

"I got an old uncle up-state an' I reckin I kin go up there if ever I get sure enough pore. Nice farm, but not enough niggers around to work it. He's asked me to come up and help him, but I don't guess I'd take much to it. Too doggone lonesome--" He broke off suddenly. "Clark, I want to tell you I'm much obliged to you for askin' me out, but I'd be a lot happier if you'd just stop the car right here an' let me walk back into town."

"Shucks!" Clark grunted. "Do you good to step out. You don't have to dance--just get out there on the floor and shake."

"Hold on," exclaimed. Jim uneasily, "Don't you go leadin' me up to any girls and leavin' me there so I'll have to dance with 'em."

Clark laughed.

"'Cause," continued Jim desperately, "without you swear you won't do that I'm agoin' to get out right here an' my good legs goin' carry me back to Jackson street."

They agreed after some argument that Jim, unmolested by females, was to view the spectacle from a secluded settee in the corner where Clark would join him whenever he wasn't dancing.

So ten o'clock found the Jelly-bean with his legs crossed and his arms conservatively folded, trying to look casually at home and politely uninterested in the dancers. At heart he was torn between overwhelming self-consciousness and an intense curiosity as to all that went on around him. He saw the girls emerge one by one from the dressing-room, stretching and pluming themselves like bright birds, smiling over their powdered shoulders at the chaperones, casting a quick glance around to take in the room and, simultaneously, the room's reaction to their entrance--and then, again like birds, alighting and nestling in the sober arms of their waiting escorts. Sally Carrol Hopper, blonde and lazy-eyed, appeared clad in her favorite pink and blinking like an awakened rose. Marjorie Haight, Marylyn Wade, Harriet Cary, all the girls he had seen loitering down Jackson Street by noon, now, curled and brilliantined and delicately tinted for the overhead lights, were miraculously strange Dresden figures of pink and blue and red and gold, fresh from the shop and not yet fully dried.

He had been there half an hour, totally uncheered by Clark's jovial visits which were each one accompanied by a "Hello, old boy, how you making out?" and a slap at his knee. A dozen males had spoken to him or stopped for a moment beside him, but he knew that they were each one surprised at finding him there and fancied that one or two were even slightly resentful. But at half past ten his embarrassment suddenly left him and a pull of breathless interest took him completely out of himself--Nancy Lamar had come out of the dressing-room.

She was dressed in yellow organdie, a costume of a hundred cool corners, with three tiers of ruffles and a big bow in back until she shed black and yellow around her in a sort of phosphorescent lustre. The Jelly-bean's eyes opened wide and a lump arose in his throat. For she stood beside the door until her partner hurried up. Jim recognized him as the stranger who had been with her in Joe Ewing's car that afternoon. He saw her set her arms akimbo and say something in a low voice, and laugh. The man laughed too and Jim experienced the quick pang of a weird new kind of pain. Some ray had passed between the pair, a shaft of beauty from that sun that had warmed him a moment since. The Jelly-bean felt suddenly like a weed in a shadow.

A minute later Clark approached him, bright-eyed and glowing.

"Hi, old man" he cried with some lack of originality. "How you making out?"

Jim replied that he was making out as well as could be expected.

"You come along with me," commanded Clark. "I've got something that'll put an edge on the evening."

Jim followed him awkwardly across the floor and up the stairs to the locker-room where Clark produced a flask of nameless yellow liquid.

"Good old corn."

Ginger ale arrived on a tray. Such potent nectar as "good old corn" needed some disguise beyond seltzer.

"Say, boy," exclaimed Clark breathlessly, "doesn't Nancy Lamar look beautiful?"

Jim nodded.

"Mighty beautiful," he agreed.

"She's all dolled up to a fare-you-well to-night," continued Clark. "Notice that fellow she's with?"

"Big fella? White pants?"

"Yeah. Well, that's Ogden Merritt from Savannah. Old man Merritt makes the Merritt safety razors. This fella's crazy about her. Been chasing, after her all year.

"She's a wild baby," continued Clark, "but I like her. So does everybody. But she sure does do crazy stunts. She usually gets out alive, but she's got scars all over her reputation from one thing or another she's done."

"That so?" Jim passed over his glass. "That's good corn."

"Not so bad. Oh, she's a wild one. Shoot craps, say, boy! And she do like her high-balls. Promised I'd give her one later on."

"She in love with this--Merritt?"

"Damned if I know. Seems like all the best girls around here marry fellas and go off somewhere."

He poured himself one more drink and carefully corked the bottle.

"Listen, Jim, I got to go dance and I'd be much obliged if you just stick this corn right on your hip as long as you're not dancing. If a man notices I've had a drink he'll come up and ask me and before I know it it's all gone and somebody else is having my good time."

So Nancy Lamar was going to marry. This toast of a town was to become the private property of an individual in white trousers--and all because white trousers' father had made a better razor than his neighbor. As they descended the stairs Jim found the idea inexplicably depressing. For the first time in his life he felt a vague and romantic yearning. A picture of her began to form in his imagination--Nancy walking boylike and debonnaire along the street, taking an orange as tithe from a worshipful fruit-dealer, charging a dope on a mythical account, at Soda Sam's, assembling a convoy of beaux and then driving off in triumphal state for an afternoon of splashing and singing.

The Jelly-bean walked out on the porch to a deserted corner, dark between the moon on the lawn and the single lighted door of the ballroom. There he found a chair and, lighting a cigarette, drifted into the thoughtless reverie that was his usual mood. Yet now it was a reverie made sensuous by the night and by the hot smell of damp powder puffs, tucked in the fronts of low dresses and distilling a thousand rich scents, to float out through the open door. The music itself, blurred by a loud trombone, became hot and shadowy, a languorous

overtone to the scraping of many shoes and slippers.

Suddenly the square of yellow light that fell through the door was obscured by a dark figure. A girl had come out of the dressing-room and was standing on the porch not more than ten feet away. Jim heard a low-breathed "doggone" and then she turned and saw him. It was Nancy Lamar.

Jim rose to his feet.

"Howdy?"

"Hello--" she paused, hesitated and then approached. "Oh, it's--Jim Powell."

He bowed slightly, tried to think of a casual remark.

"Do you suppose," she began quickly, "I mean--do you know anything about gum?"

"What?" "I've got gum on my shoe. Some utter ass left his or her gum on the floor and of course I stepped in it."

Jim blushed, inappropriately.

"Do you know how to get it off?" she demanded petulantly. "I've tried a knife. I've tried every damn thing in the dressing-room. I've tried soap and water--and even perfume and I've ruined my powder-puff trying to make it stick to that."

Jim considered the question in some agitation.

"Why--I think maybe gasolene--"

The words had scarcely left his lips when she grasped his hand and pulled him at a run off the low veranda, over a flower bed and at a gallop toward a group of cars parked in the moonlight by the first hole of the golf course.

"Turn on the gasolene," she commanded breathlessly.

"What?"

"For the gum of course. I've got to get it off. I can't dance with gum on."

Obediently Jim turned to the cars and began inspecting them with a view to obtaining the desired solvent. Had she demanded a cylinder he would have done his best to wrench one out.

"Here," he said after a moment's search. "'Here's one that's easy. Got a handkerchief?"

"It's up-stairs wet. I used it for the soap and water."

Jim laboriously explored his pockets.

"Don't believe I got one either."

"Doggone it! Well, we can turn it on and let it run on the ground."

He turned the spout; a dripping began.

"More!"

He turned it on fuller. The dripping became a flow and formed an oily pool that glistened brightly, reflecting a dozen tremulous moons on its quivering bosom.

"Ah," she sighed contentedly, "let it all out. The only thing to do is to wade in it."

In desperation he turned on the tap full and the pool suddenly widened sending tiny rivers and trickles in all directions.

"That's fine. That's something like."

Raising her skirts she stepped gracefully in.

"I know this'll take it off," she murmured.

Jim smiled.

"There's lots more cars."

She stepped daintily out of the gasolene and began scraping her slippers, side and bottom, on the running-board of the automobile. The jelly-bean contained himself no longer. He bent double with explosive laughter and after a second she joined in.

"You're here with Clark Darrow, aren't you?" she asked as they walked back toward the veranda.

"Yes."

"You know where he is now?"

"Out dancin', I reckin."

"The deuce. He promised me a highball."

"Well," said Jim, "I guess that'll be all right. I got his bottle right here in my pocket."

She smiled at him radiantly.

"I guess maybe you'll need ginger ale though," he added.

"Not me. Just the bottle."

"Sure enough?"

She laughed scornfully.

"Try me. I can drink anything any man can. Let's sit down."

She perched herself on the side of a table and he dropped into one of the wicker chairs beside her. Taking out the cork she held the flask to her lips and took a long drink. He watched her fascinated.

"Like it?"

She shook her head breathlessly.

"No, but I like the way it makes me feel. I think most people are that way."

Jim agreed.

"My daddy liked it too well. It got him."

"American men," said Nancy gravely, "don't know how to drink."

"What?" Jim was startled.

"In fact," she went on carelessly, "they don't know how to do anything very well. The one thing I regret in my life is that I wasn't born in England."

"In England?"

"Yes. It's the one regret of my life that I wasn't."

"Do you like it over there?" "Yes. Immensely. I've never been there in person, but I've met a lot of Englishmen who were over here in the army, Oxford and Cambridge men--you know, that's like Sewanee and University of Georgia are here--and of course I've read a lot of

English novels."

Jim was interested, amazed.

"D' you ever hear of Lady Diana Manner?" she asked earnestly.

No, Jim had not.

"Well, she's what I'd like to be. Dark, you know, like me, and wild as sin. She's the girl who rode her horse up the steps of some cathedral or church or something and all the novelists made their heroines do it afterwards."

Jim nodded politely. He was out of his depths.

"Pass the bottle," suggested Nancy. "I'm going to take another little one. A little drink wouldn't hurt a baby.

"You see," she continued, again breathless after a draught. "People over there have style, Nobody has style here. I mean the boys here aren't really worth dressing up for or doing sensational things for. Don't you know?"

"I suppose so--I mean I suppose not," murmured Jim.

"And I'd like to do 'em an' all. I'm really the only girl in town that has style."

She stretched, out her arms and yawned pleasantly.

"Pretty evening."

"Sure is," agreed Jim.

"Like to have boat" she suggested dreamily. "Like to sail out on a silver lake, say the Thames, for instance. Have champagne and caviare sandwiches along. Have about eight people. And one of the men would jump overboard to amuse the party, and get drowned like a man did with Lady Diana Manners once."

"Did he do it to please her?" "Didn't mean drown himself to please her. He just meant to jump overboard and make everybody laugh,"

"I reckin they just died laughin' when he drowned."

"Oh, I suppose they laughed a little," she admitted. "I imagine she did, anyway. She's pretty hard, I guess--like I am."

"You hard?"

"Like nails." She yawned again and added, "Give me a little more from that bottle."

Jim hesitated but she held out her hand defiantly, "Don't treat me like a girl;" she warned him. "I'm not like any girl _you_ ever saw," She considered. "Still, perhaps you're right. You got--you got old head on young shoulders."

She jumped to her feet and moved toward the door. The Jelly-bean rose also.

"Good-bye," she said politely, "good-bye. Thanks, Jelly-bean."

Then she stepped inside and left him wide-eyed upon the porch.

III

At twelve o'clock a procession of cloaks issued single file from the women's dressing-room and, each one pairing with a coated beau like dancers meeting in a cotillion figure, drifted through the door with sleepy happy laughter--through the door into the dark where autos backed and snorted and parties called to one another and gathered around the water-cooler.

Jim, sitting in his corner, rose to look for Clark. They had met at eleven; then Clark had gone in to dance. So, seeking him, Jim wandered into the soft-drink stand that had once been a bar. The room was deserted except for a sleepy negro dozing behind the counter and two boys lazily fingering a pair of dice at one of the tables. Jim was about to leave when he saw Clark coming in. At the same moment Clark looked up.

"Hi, Jim" he commanded. "C'mon over and help us with this bottle. I guess there's not much left, but there's one all around."

Nancy, the man from Savannah, Marylyn Wade, and Joe Ewing were lolling and laughing in the doorway. Nancy caught Jim's eye and winked at him humorously.

They drifted over to a table and arranging themselves around it waited for the waiter to bring ginger ale. Jim, faintly ill at ease, turned his eyes on Nancy, who had drifted into a nickel crap game with the two boys at the next table.

"Bring them over here," suggested Clark.

Joe looked around.

"We don't want to draw a crowd. It's against club rules.

"Nobody's around," insisted Clark, "except Mr. Taylor. He's walking up and down, like a wild-man trying find out who let all the gasolene out of his car."

There was a general laugh.

"I bet a million Nancy got something on her shoe again. You can't park when she's around."

"O Nancy, Mr. Taylor's looking for you!"

Nancy's cheeks were glowing with excitement over the game. "I haven't seen his silly little flivver in two weeks."

Jim felt a sudden silence. He turned and saw an individual of uncertain age standing in the doorway.

Clark's voice punctuated the embarrassment.

"Won't you join us Mr. Taylor?"

"Thanks."

Mr. Taylor spread his unwelcome presence over a chair. "Have to, I guess. I'm waiting till they dig me up some gasolene. Somebody got funny with my car."

His eyes narrowed and he looked quickly from one to the other. Jim wondered what he had heard from the doorway--tried to remember what had been said.

"I'm right to-night," Nancy sang out, "and my four bits is in the ring."

"Faded!" snapped Taylor suddenly.

"Why, Mr. Taylor, I didn't know you shot craps!" Nancy was overjoyed to find that he had seated himself and instantly covered her bet. They had openly disliked each other since the night she had definitely discouraged a series of rather pointed advances.

"All right, babies, do it for your mamma. Just one little seven." Nancy was _cooing_ to the dice. She rattled them with a brave underhand flourish, and rolled them out on the table.

"Ah-h! I suspected it. And now again with the dollar up."

Five passes to her credit found Taylor a bad loser. She was making it personal, and after each success Jim watched triumph flutter across her face. She was doubling with each throw--such luck could scarcely last. "Better go easy," he cautioned her timidly.

"Ah, but watch this one," she whispered. It was eight on the dice and she called her number.

"Little Ada, this time we're going South."

Ada from Decatur rolled over the table. Nancy was flushed and half-hysterical, but her luck was holding.

She drove the pot up and up, refusing to drag. Taylor was drumming with his fingers on the table but he was in to stay.

Then Nancy tried for a ten and lost the dice. Taylor seized them avidly. He shot in silence, and in the hush of excitement the clatter of one pass after another on the table was the only sound.

Now Nancy had the dice again, but her luck had broken. An hour passed. Back and forth it went. Taylor had been at it again--and again and again. They were even at last--Nancy lost her ultimate five dollars.

"Will you take my check," she said quickly, "for fifty, and we'll shoot it all?" Her voice was a little unsteady and her hand shook as she reached to the money.

Clark exchanged an uncertain but alarmed glance with Joe Ewing. Taylor shot again. He had Nancy's check.

"How 'bout another?" she said wildly. "Jes' any bank'll do--money everywhere as a matter of fact."

Jim understood---the "good old corn" he had given her--the "good old corn" she had taken since. He wished he dared interfere--a girl of that age and position would hardly have two bank accounts. When the clock struck two he contained himself no longer.

"May I--can't you let me roll 'em for you?" he suggested, his low, lazy voice a little strained.

Suddenly sleepy and listless, Nancy flung the dice down before him.

"All right--old boy! As Lady Diana Manners says, 'Shoot 'em, Jelly-bean'--My luck's gone."

"Mr. Taylor," said Jim, carelessly, "we'll shoot for one of those there checks against the cash."

Half an hour later Nancy swayed forward and clapped him on the back.

"Stole my luck, you did." She was nodding her head sagely.

Jim swept up the last check and putting it with the others tore them into confetti and scattered them on the floor. Someone started singing and Nancy kicking her chair backward rose to her feet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she announced, "Ladies--that's you Marylyn. I want to tell the world that Mr. Jim Powell, who is a well-known Jelly-bean of this city, is an exception to the great rule--'lucky in dice--unlucky in love.' He's lucky in dice, and as matter of fact I--I _love_ him. Ladies and gentlemen, Nancy Lamar, famous dark-haired beauty often featured in the _Herald_ as one the most popular members of younger set as other girls are often featured in this particular case; Wish to announce--wish to announce, anyway, Gentlemen--" She tipped suddenly. Clark caught her and restored her balance.

"My error," she laughed, "she--stoops to--stoops to--anyways--We'll drink to Jelly-bean ... Mr. Jim Powell, King of the Jelly-beans."

And a few minutes later as Jim waited hat in hand for Clark in the darkness of that same corner of the porch where she had come searching for gasolene, she appeared suddenly beside him.

"Jelly-bean," she said, "are you here, Jelly-bean? I think--" and her slight unsteadiness seemed part of an enchanted dream--"I think you deserve one of my sweetest kisses for that, Jelly-bean."

For an instant her arms were around his neck--her lips were pressed to his.

"I'm a wild part of the world, Jelly-bean, but you did me a good turn."

Then she was gone, down the porch, over the cricket-loud lawn. Jim saw Merritt come out the front door and say something to her angrily--saw her laugh and, turning away, walk with averted eyes to his car. Marylyn and Joe followed, singing a drowsy song about a Jazz baby.

Clark came out and joined Jim on the steps. "All pretty lit, I guess," he yawned. "Merritt's in a mean mood. He's certainly off Nancy."

Over east along the golf course a faint rug of gray spread itself across the feet of the night. The party in the car began to chant a

chorus as the engine warmed up.

"Good-night everybody," called Clark.

"Good-night, Clark."

"Good-night."

There was a pause, and then a soft, happy voice added,

"Good-night, Jelly-bean."

The car drove off to a burst of singing. A rooster on a farm across the way took up a solitary mournful crow, and behind them, a last negro waiter turned out the porch light, Jim and Clark strolled over toward the Ford, their, shoes crunching raucously on the gravel drive.

"Oh boy!" sighed Clark softly, "how you can set those dice!"

It was still too dark for him to see the flush on Jim's thin cheeks--or to know that it was a flush of unfamiliar shame.

IV

Over Tilly's garage a bleak room echoed all day to the rumble and snorting down-stairs and the singing of the negro washers as they turned the hose on the cars outside. It was a cheerless square of a room, punctuated with a bed and a battered table on which lay half a dozen books--Joe Miller's "Slow Train thru Arkansas," "Lucille," in an old edition very much annotated in an old-fashioned hand; "The Eyes of the World," by Harold Bell Wright, and an ancient prayer-book of the Church of England with the name Alice Powell and the date 1831 written on the fly-leaf.

The East, gray when Jelly-bean entered the garage, became a rich and vivid blue as he turned on his solitary electric light. He snapped it out again, and going to the window rested his elbows on the sill and stared into the deepening morning. With the awakening of his emotions, his first perception was a sense of futility, a dull ache at the utter grayness of his life. A wall had sprung up suddenly around him hedging him in, a wall as definite and tangible as the white wall of his bare room. And with his perception of this wall all that had been the romance of his existence, the casualness, the light-hearted improvidence, the miraculous open-handedness of life faded out. The Jelly-bean strolling up Jackson Street humming a lazy song, known at every shop and street stand, cropful of easy greeting and local wit, sad sometimes for only the sake of sadness and the flight of

time--that Jelly-bean was suddenly vanished. The very name was a reproach, a triviality. With a flood of insight he knew that Merritt must despise him, that even Nancy's kiss in the dawn would have awakened not jealousy but only a contempt for Nancy's so lowering herself. And on his part the Jelly-bean had used for her a dingy subterfuge learned from the garage. He had been her moral laundry; the stains were his.

As the gray became blue, brightened and filled the room, he crossed to his bed and threw himself down on it, gripping the edges fiercely.

"I love her," he cried aloud, "God!"

As he said this something gave way within him like a lump melting in his throat. The air cleared and became radiant with dawn, and turning over on his face he began to sob dully into the pillow.

In the sunshine of three o'clock Clark Darrow chugging painfully along Jackson Street was hailed by the Jelly-bean, who stood on the curb with his fingers in his vest pockets.

"Hi!" called Clark, bringing his Ford to an astonishing stop alongside. "Just get up?"

The Jelly-bean shook his head.

"Never did go to bed. Felt sorta restless, so I took a long walk this morning out in the country. Just got into town this minute."

"Should think you _would_ feel restless. I been feeling thataway all day--"

"I'm thinkin' of leavin' town" continued the Jelly-bean, absorbed by his own thoughts. "Been thinkin' of goin' up on the farm, and takin' a little that work off Uncle Dun. Reckin I been bummin' too long."

Clark was silent and the Jelly-bean continued:

"I reckin maybe after Aunt Mamie dies I could sink that money of mine in the farm and make somethin' out of it. All my people originally came from that part up there. Had a big place."

Clark looked at him curiously.

"That's funny," he said. "This--this sort of affected me the same way."

The Jelly-bean hesitated.

"I don't know," he began slowly, "somethin' about--about that girl last night talkin' about a lady named Diana Manners--an English lady, sorta got me thinkin'!" He drew himself up and looked oddly at Clark, "I had a family once," he said defiantly.

Clark nodded.

"I know."

"And I'm the last of 'em," continued the Jelly-bean his voice rising slightly, "and I ain't worth shucks. Name they call me by means jelly--weak and wobbly like. People who weren't nothin' when my folks was a lot turn up their noses when they pass me on the street."

Again Clark was silent.

"So I'm through, I'm goin' to-day. And when I come back to this town it's going to be like a gentleman."

Clark took out his handkerchief and wiped his damp brow.

"Reckon you're not the only one it shook up," he admitted gloomily. "All this thing of girls going round like they do is going to stop right quick. Too bad, too, but everybody'll have to see it thataway."

"Do you mean," demanded Jim in surprise, "that all that's leaked out?"

"Leaked out? How on earth could they keep it secret. It'll be announced in the papers to-night. Doctor Lamar's got to save his name somehow."

Jim put his hands on the sides of the car and tightened his long fingers on the metal.

"Do you mean Taylor investigated those checks?"

It was Clark's turn to be surprised.

"Haven't you heard what happened?"

Jim's startled eyes were answer enough.

"Why," announced Clark dramatically, "those four got another bottle of corn, got tight and decided to shock the town--so Nancy and that fella Merritt were married in Rockville at seven o'clock this morning."

A tiny indentation appeared in the metal under the Jelly-bean's fingers.

"Married?"

"Sure enough. Nancy sobered up and rushed back into town, crying and frightened to death--claimed it'd all been a mistake. First Doctor Lamar went wild and was going to kill Merritt, but finally they got it patched up some way, and Nancy and Merritt went to Savannah on the two-thirty train."

Jim closed his eyes and with an effort overcame a sudden sickness.

"It's too bad," said Clark philosophically. "I don't mean the wedding--reckon that's all right, though I don't guess Nancy cared a darn about him. But it's a crime for a nice girl like that to hurt her family that way."

The Jelly-bean let go the car and turned away. Again something was going on inside him, some inexplicable but almost chemical change.

"Where you going?" asked Clark.

The Jelly-bean turned and looked dully back over his shoulder.

"Got to go," he muttered. "Been up too long; feelin' right sick."

"Oh."

* * * * *

The street was hot at three and hotter still at four, the April dust seeming to enmesh the sun and give it forth again as a world-old joke forever played on an eternity of afternoons. But at half past four a first layer of quiet fell and the shades lengthened under the awnings and heavy foliaged trees. In this heat nothing mattered. All life was weather, a waiting through the hot where events had no significance for the cool that was soft and caressing like a woman's hand on a tired forehead. Down in Georgia there is a feeling--perhaps inarticulate--that this is the greatest wisdom of the South--so after a while the Jelly-bean turned into a poolhall on Jackson Street where he was sure to find a congenial crowd who would make all the old jokes--the ones he knew.

MARS JEEMS'S NIGHTMARE
The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Conjure Woman, by Charles W. Chesnutt

We found old Julius very useful when we moved to our new residence. He had a thorough knowledge of the neighborhood, was familiar with the roads and the watercourses, knew the qualities of the various soils and what they would produce, and where the best hunting and fishing were to be had. He was a marvelous hand in the management of horses and dogs, with whose mental processes he manifested a greater familiarity than mere use would seem to account for, though it was doubtless due to the simplicity of a life that had kept him close to nature. Toward my tract of land and the things that were on it—the creeks, the swamps, the hills, the meadows, the stones, the trees—he maintained a peculiar personal attitude, that might be called predial rather than proprietary. He had been accustomed, until long after middle life, to look upon himself as the property of another.
When this relation was no longer possible, owing to the war, and to his master's death and the dispersion of the family, he had been unable to break off entirely the mental habits of a lifetime, but had attached himself to the old plantation, of which he seemed to consider himself an appurtenance. We found him useful in many ways and entertaining in others, and my wife and I took quite a fancy to him.

Shortly after we became established in our home on the sand-hills, Julius brought up to the house one day a colored boy of about seventeen, whom he introduced as his grandson, and for whom he solicited employment. I was not favorably impressed by the youth's appearance,—quite the contrary, in fact; but mainly to please the old man I hired Tom —his name was Tom—to help about the stables, weed the garden, cut wood and bring water, and in general to make himself useful about the outdoor work of the household.

My first impression of Tom proved to be correct. He turned out to be very trifling, and I was much annoyed by his laziness, his carelessness, and his apparent lack of any sense of responsibility. I kept him longer than I should, on Julius's account, hoping that he might improve; but he seemed to grow worse instead of better, and when I finally reached the limit of my patience, I discharged him.

"I am sorry, Julius," I said to the old man; "I should have liked to oblige you by keeping him; but I can't stand Tom any longer. He is absolutely untrustworthy."

"Yas, suh," replied Julius, with a deep sigh and a long shake of the head, "I knows he ain' much account, en dey ain' much 'pen'ence ter be put on 'im. But I wuz hopin' dat you mought make some 'lowance fuh a' ign'ant young nigger, suh, en gib 'im one mo' chance."

But I had hardened my heart. I had always been too easily imposed upon, and had suffered too much from this weakness. I determined to be firm as a rock in this instance.

"No, Julius," I rejoined decidedly, "it is impossible. I gave him more than a fair trial, and he simply won't do."

When my wife and I set out for our drive in the cool of the evening,—afternoon is "evening" in Southern parlance,—one of the servants put into the rock-away two large earthenware jugs. Our drive was to be down through the swamp to the mineral spring at the foot of the sand-hills beyond. The water of this spring was strongly impregnated with sulphur and iron, and, while not particularly agreeable of smell or taste, was used by us, in moderation, for sanitary reasons.

When we reached the spring, we found a man engaged in cleaning it out. In answer to an inquiry he said that if we would wait five or ten minutes, his task would be finished and the spring in such condition that we could fill our jugs. We might have driven on, and come back by way of the spring, but there was a bad stretch of road beyond, and we concluded to remain where we were until the spring should be ready. We were in a cool and shady place. It was often necessary to wait awhile in North Carolina; and our Northern energy had not been entirely proof against the influences of climate and local custom.

While we sat there, a man came suddenly around a turn of the road ahead of us. I recognized in him a neighbor with whom I had exchanged formal calls. He was driving a horse, apparently a high-spirited creature, possessing, so far as I could see at a glance, the marks of good temper and good breeding; the gentleman, I had heard it suggested, was slightly deficient in both. The horse was rearing and plunging, and the man was beating him furiously with a buggy-whip. When he saw us, he flushed a fiery red, and, as he passed, held the reins with one hand, at some risk to his safety, lifted his hat, and bowed somewhat constrainedly as the horse darted by us, still panting and snorting with fear.

"He looks as though he were ashamed of himself," I observed.

"I'm sure he ought to be," exclaimed my wife indignantly. "I think there is no worse sin and no more disgraceful thing than cruelty."

"I quite agree with you," I assented.

"A man w'at 'buses his hoss is gwine ter be ha'd on de folks w'at wuks fer 'im," remarked Julius. "Ef young Mistah McLean doan min', he'll hab a bad dream one er dese days, des lack 'is grandaddy had way back yander, long yeahs befo' de wah."

"What was it about Mr. McLean's dream, Julius?" I asked. The man had not yet finished cleaning the spring, and we might as well put in time listening to Julius as in any other way. We had found some of his plantation tales quite interesting.

"Mars Jeems McLean," said Julius, "wuz de grandaddy er dis yer gent'eman w'at is des gone by us beatin' his hoss. He had a big plantation en a heap er niggers. Mars Jeems wuz a ha'd man, en monst'us stric' wid his han's. Eber sence he growed up he

nebber 'peared ter hab no feelin' fer nobody. W'en his daddy, ole Mars John McLean, died, de plantation en all de niggers fell ter young Mars Jeems. He had be'n bad 'nuff befo', but it wa'n't long atterwa'ds 'tel he got so dey wuz no use in libbin' at all ef you ha' ter lib roun' Mars Jeems. His niggers wuz bleedzd ter slabe fum daylight ter da'k, w'iles yuther folks's did n' hafter wuk 'cep'n' fum sun ter sun; en dey did n' git no mo' ter eat dan dey oughter, en dat de coa'ses' kin'. Dey wa'n't 'lowed ter sing, ner dance, ner play de banjo w'en Mars Jeems wuz roun' de place; fer Mars Jeems say he would n' hab no sech gwines-on,—said he bought his han's ter wuk, en not ter play, en w'en night come dey mus' sleep en res', so dey 'd be ready ter git up soon in de mawnin' en go ter dey wuk fresh en strong.

"Mars Jeems did n' 'low no co'tin' er juneseyin' roun' his plantation,—said he wanted his niggers ter put dey min's on dey wuk, en not be wastin' dey time wid no sech foolis'ness. En he would n' let his han's git married,—said he wuz n' raisin' niggers, but wuz raisin' cotton. En w'eneber any er de boys en gals 'ud 'mence ter git sweet on one ernudder, he 'd sell one er de yuther un 'em, er sen' 'em way down in Robeson County ter his yuther plantation, whar dey could n' nebber see one ernudder.

"Ef any er de niggers eber complained, dey got fo'ty; so co'se dey did n' many un 'em complain. But dey did n' lack it, des de same, en nobody could n' blame 'em, fer dey had a ha'd time. Mars Jeems did n' make no 'lowance fer nachul bawn laz'ness, ner sickness, ner trouble in de min', ner nuffin; he wuz des gwine ter git so much wuk outer eve'y han', er know de reason w'y.

"Dey wuz one time de niggers 'lowed, fer a spell, dat Mars Jeems mought git bettah. He tuk a lackin' ter Mars Marrabo McSwayne's oldes' gal, Miss Libbie, en useter go ober dere eve'y day er eve'y ebenin', en folks said dey wuz gwine ter git married sho'. But it 'pears dat Miss Libbie heared 'bout de gwineson on Mars Jeems's plantation, en she des 'lowed she could n' trus' herse'f wid no sech a man; dat he mought git so useter 'busin' his niggers dat he 'd 'mence ter 'buse his wife atter he got useter habbin' her roun' de house. So she 'clared she wuz n' gwine ter hab nuffin mo' ter do wid young Mars Jeems.

"De niggers wuz all monst'us sorry w'en de match wuz bust' up, fer now Mars Jeems got wusser 'n he wuz befo' he sta'ted sweethea'tin'. De time he useter spen' co'tin' Miss Libbie he put in findin' fault wid de niggers, en all his bad feelin's 'ca'se Miss Libbie th'owed 'im ober he 'peared ter try ter wuk off on de po' niggers.

"W'iles Mars Jeems wuz co'tin' Miss Libbie, two er de han's on de plantation had got ter settin' a heap er sto' by one ernudder. One un 'em wuz name' Solomon, en de yuther wuz a 'oman w'at wukked in de fiel' 'long er 'im—I fe'git dat 'oman's name, but it doan 'mount ter much in de tale nohow. Now, whuther 'ca'se Mars Jeems wuz so tuk up wid his own junesey[2] dat he did n' paid no 'tention fer a w'ile ter w'at wuz gwine on 'twix' Solomon en his junesey, er whuther his own co'tin' made 'im kin' er easy on de co'tin' in de qua'ters, dey ain' no tellin'. But dey's one thing sho', dat w'en Miss Libbie th'owed 'im ober, he foun' out 'bout Solomon en de gal monst'us quick, en gun Solomon fo'ty, en sont de gal down ter de Robeson County plantation, en tol' all de niggers ef he ketch 'em at any mo' sech foolishness, he wuz gwine ter skin 'em alibe en tan dey hides befo' dey ve'y eyes. Co'se he would n' 'a' done it, but he mought 'a' made things wusser 'n dey wuz. So you kin 'magine dey wa'n't much lub-makin' in de qua'ters fer a long time.

[2]
Sweetheart.

"Mars Jeems useter go down ter de yuther plantation sometimes fer a week er mo', en so he had ter hab a oberseah ter look atter his wuk w'iles he 'uz gone. Mars Jeems's oberseah wuz a po' w'ite man name' Nick Johnson,—de niggers called 'im Mars Johnson ter his face, but behin' his back dey useter call 'im Ole Nick, en de name suited 'im ter a T. He wuz wusser 'n Mars Jeems ever da'ed ter be. Co'se de darkies did n' lack de way Mars Jeems used 'em, but he wuz de marster, en had a right ter do ez he please'; but dis yer Ole Nick wa'n't nuffin but a po' buckrah, en all de niggers 'spised 'im ez much ez dey hated 'im, fer he did n' own nobody, en wa'n't no bettah 'n a nigger, fer in dem days any 'spectable pusson would ruther be a nigger dan a po' w'ite man.

"Now, atter Solomon's gal had be'n sont away, he kep' feelin' mo' en mo' bad erbout it, 'tel fin'lly he 'lowed he wuz gwine ter see ef dey could n' be sump'n done fer ter git 'er back, en ter make Mars Jeems treat de darkies bettah. So he tuk a peck er co'n out'n de ba'n one night, en went ober ter see ole Aun' Peggy, de free-nigger cunjuh 'oman down by de Wim'l'ton Road.

"Aun' Peggy listen' ter 'is tale, en ax' him some queshtuns, en den tol' 'im she 'd wuk her roots, en see w'at dey 'd say 'bout it, en ter-morrer night he sh'd come back ag'in en fetch

ernudder peck er co'n, en den she 'd hab sump'n fer ter tell 'im.

"So Solomon went back de nex' night, en sho' 'nuff, Aun' Peggy tol' 'im w'at ter do. She gun 'im some stuff w'at look' lack it be'n made by poundin' up some roots en yarbs wid a pestle in a mo'tar.

"'Dis yer stuff,' sez she, 'is monst'us pow'ful kin' er goopher. You take dis home, en gin it ter de cook, ef you kin trus' her, en tell her fer ter put it in yo' marster's soup de fus' cloudy day he hab okra soup fer dinnah. Min' you follers de d'rections.'

"'It ain' gwineter p'isen 'im, is it?' ax' Solomon, gittin' kin' er skeered; fer Solomon wuz a good man, en did n' want ter do nobody no rale ha'm.

"'Oh, no,' sez ole Aun' Peggy, 'it's gwine ter do 'im good, but he'll hab a monst'us bad dream fus'. A mont' fum now you come down heah en lemme know how de goopher is wukkin'. Fer I ain' done much er dis kin' er cunj'in' er late yeahs, en I has ter kinder keep track un it ter see dat it doan 'complish no mo' d'n I 'lows fer it ter do. En I has ter be kinder keerful 'bout cunj'in' w'ite folks; so be sho' en lemme know, w'ateber you do, des w'at is gwine on roun' de plantation.'

"So Solomon say all right, en tuk de goopher mixtry up ter de big house en gun it ter de cook, en tol' her fer ter put it in Mars Jeems's soup de fus' cloudy day she hab okra soup fer dinnah. It happen' dat de ve'y nex' day wuz a cloudy day, en so de cook made okra soup fer Mars Jeems's dinnah, en put de powder Solomon gun her inter de soup, en made de soup rale good, so Mars Jeems eat a whole lot of it en 'peared ter enjoy it.

"De nex' mawnin' Mars Jeems tol' de oberseah he wuz gwine 'way on some bizness, en den he wuz gwine ter his yuther plantation, down in Robeson County, en he did n' 'spec' he 'd be back fer a mont' er so.

"But,' sezee, 'I wants you ter run dis yer plantation fer all it's wuth. Dese yer niggers is gittin' monst'us triflin' en lazy en keerless, en dey ain' no 'pen'ence ter be put in 'em. I wants dat stop', en w'iles I 'm gone erway I wants de 'spenses cut 'way down en a heap mo' wuk done. Fac', I wants dis yer plantation ter make a reco'd dat'll show w'at kinder oberseah you is.'

"Ole Nick did n' said nuffin but 'Yas, suh,' but de way he kinder grin' ter hisse'f en show' his big yaller teef, en snap' de rawhide he useter kyar roun' wid 'im, made col' chills run up and down de backbone er dem niggers w'at heared Mars Jeems a-talkin'. En dat night dey wuz mo'nin' en groanin' down in de qua'ters, fer de niggers all knowed w'at wuz comin'.

"So, sho' 'nuff, Mars Jeems went erway nex' mawnin', en de trouble begun. Mars Johnson sta'ted off de ve'y fus' day fer ter see w'at he could hab ter show Mars Jeems w'en he come back. He made de tasks bigger en de rashuns littler, en w'en de niggers had wukked all day, he 'd fin' sump'n fer 'em ter do roun' de ba'n er som'ers atter da'k, fer ter keep 'em busy a' hour er so befo' dey went ter sleep.

"About th'ee er fo' days atter Mars Jeems went erway, young Mars Dunkin McSwayne rode up ter de big house one day wid a nigger settin' behin' 'im in de buggy, tied ter de seat, en ax' ef Mars Jeems wuz home. Mars Johnson wuz at de house, and he say no.

"'Well,' sez Mars Dunkin, sezee, 'I fotch dis nigger ober ter Mistah McLean fer ter pay a bet I made wid 'im las' week w'en we wuz playin' kya'ds te'gedder. I bet 'im a nigger man, en heah 's one I reckon'll fill de bill. He wuz tuk up de yuther day fer a stray nigger, en he could n' gib no 'count er hisse'f, en so he wuz sol' at oction, en I bought 'im. He's kinder

brash, but I knows yo' powers,
Mistah Johnson, en I reckon ef anybody kin make 'im toe de ma'k, you is de man.'

"Mars Johnson grin' one er dem grins w'at show' all his snaggle teef, en make de niggers 'low he look lack de ole debbil, en
sezee ter Mars Dunkin:—

"'I reckon you kin trus' me, Mistah Dunkin, fer ter tame any nigger wuz eber bawn. De nigger doan lib w'at I can't take down in
'bout fo' days.'

"Well, Ole Nick had 'is han's full long er dat noo nigger; en w'iles de res' er de darkies wuz sorry fer de po' man, dey 'lowed he
kep' Mars Johnson so busy dat dey got along better 'n dey 'd 'a' done ef de noo nigger had nebber come.

"De fus' thing dat happen', Mars Johnson sez ter dis yer noo man:—

"'W'at 's yo' name, Sambo?'

"'My name ain' Sambo,' 'spon' de noo nigger.

"'Did I ax you w'at yo' name wa'n't?' sez Mars Johnson. 'You wants ter be pa'tic'lar how you talks ter me. Now, w'at is yo' name, en
whar did you come fum?'

"'I dunno my name,' sez de nigger, 'en I doan 'member whar I come fum. My head is all kin' er mix' up.'

"'Yas,' sez Mars Johnson, 'I reckon I'll ha' ter gib you sump'n fer ter cl'ar yo' head. At de same time, it'll l'arn you some manners,
en atter dis mebbe you'll say "suh" w'en you speaks ter me.'

"Well, Mars Johnson haul' off wid his rawhide en hit de noo nigger once. De noo man look' at Mars Johnson fer a minute ez ef he
did n' know w'at ter make er dis yer kin' er l'arnin'. But w'en de oberseah raise' his w'ip ter hit him ag'in, de noo nigger des haul' off
en made fer Mars Johnson, en ef some er de yuther niggers had n' stop' 'im, it 'peared ez ef he mought 'a' made it wa'm fer Ole
Nick dere fer a w'ile. But de oberseah made de yuther niggers he'p tie de noo nigger up, en den gun 'im fo'ty, wid a dozen er so
th'owed in fer good measure, fer Ole Nick wuz nebber stingy wid dem kin' er rashuns. De nigger went on at a tarrable rate, des
lack a wil' man, but co'se he wuz bleedzd ter take his med'cine, fer he wuz tied up en could n' he'p his-se'f.

"Mars Johnson lock' de noo nigger up in de ba'n, en did n' gib 'im nuffin ter eat fer a day er so, 'tel he got 'im kin'er quiet' down,
en den he tu'nt 'im loose en put 'im ter wuk. De nigger 'lowed he wa'n't useter wukkin', en would n' wuk, en Mars Johnson gun 'im
anudder fo'ty fer laziness en impidence, en let 'im fas' a day er so mo', en den put 'im ter wuk ag'in. De nigger went ter wuk, but
did n' 'pear ter know how ter han'le a hoe. It tuk des 'bout half de oberseah's time lookin' atter 'im, en dat po' nigger got mo'
lashin's en cussin's en cuffin's dan any fo' yuthers on de plantation. He did n' mix' wid ner talk much ter de res' er de niggers, en
could n' 'pear ter git it th'oo his min' dat he wuz a slabe en had ter wuk en min' de w'ite folks, spite er de fac' dat Ole Nick gun 'im
a lesson eve'y day. En fin'lly Mars Johnson 'lowed dat he could n' do nuffin wid 'im; dat ef he wuz his nigger, he 'd break his
sperrit er break 'is neck, one er de yuther. But co'se he wuz only sont ober on trial, en ez he did n' gib sat'sfaction, en he had n'
heared fum Mars Jeems 'bout w'en he wuz comin' back; en ez he wuz feared he 'd git mad some time er 'nuther en kill de nigger
befo' he knowed it, he 'lowed he 'd better sen' 'im back whar he come fum. So he tied 'im up en sont 'im back ter Mars Dunkin.

"Now, Mars Dunkin McSwayne wuz one er dese yer easy-gwine gent'emen w'at did n' lack ter hab no trouble wid niggers er
nobody e'se, en he knowed ef Mars Ole Nick could n' git 'long wid dis nigger, nobody could. So

he tuk de nigger ter town dat same day, en sol' 'im ter a trader w'at wuz gittin' up a gang er lackly niggers fer ter ship off on de steamboat ter go down de ribber ter Wim'l'ton en fum dere ter Noo Orleens.

"De nex' day atter de noo man had be'n sont away, Solomon wuz wukkin' in de cotton-fiel', en w'en he got ter de fence nex' ter de woods, at de een' er de row, who sh'd he see on de yuther side but ole Aun' Peggy. She beckon' ter 'im,—de oberseah wuz down on de yuther side er de fiel',—en sez she:—

"'W'y ain' you done come en 'po'ted ter me lack I tol' you?'

"'W'y, law! Aun' Peggy,' sez Solomon, 'dey ain' nuffin ter 'po't. Mars Jeems went away de day atter we gun 'im de goopher mixtry, en we ain' seed hide ner hair un 'im sence, en co'se we doan know nuffin 'bout w'at 'fec' it had on 'im.'

"'I doan keer nuffin 'bout yo' Mars Jeems now; w'at I wants ter know is w'at is be'n gwine on 'mongs' de niggers. Has you be'n gittin' 'long any better on de plantation?'

"'No, Aun' Peggy, we be'n gittin' 'long wusser. Mars Johnson is stric'er 'n he eber wuz befo', en de po' niggers doan ha'dly git time ter draw dey bref, en dey 'lows dey mought des ez well be dead ez alibe.'

"' Uh huh!' sez Aun' Peggy, sez she, 'I tol' you dat 'uz monst'us pow'ful goopher, en its wuk doan 'pear all at once.'

"'Long ez we had dat noo nigger heah,' Solomon went on, 'he kep' Mars Johnson busy pa't er de time; but now he 's gone erway, I s'pose de res' un us'll ketch it wusser 'n eber.'

"'W'at's gone wid de noo nigger?' sez Aun' Peggy, rale quick, battin' her eyes en straight'nin' up.

"'Ole Nick done sont 'im back ter Mars Dunkin, who had fotch 'im heah fer ter pay a gamblin' debt ter Mars Jeems,' sez Solomon, 'en I heahs Mars Dunkin has sol' 'im ter a nigger-trader up in Patesville, w'at 's gwine ter ship 'im off wid a gang ter-morrer.'

"Ole Aun' Peggy 'peared ter git rale stirred up w'en Solomon tol' 'er dat, en sez she, shakin' her stick at 'im:—

"'W'y did n' you come en tell me 'bout dis noo nigger bein' sol' erway? Did n' you promus me, ef I 'd gib you dat goopher, you 'd come en 'po't ter me 'bout all w'at wuz gwine on on dis plantation Co'se I could 'a' foun' out fer myse'f, but I 'pended on yo' tellin' me, en now by not doin' it I's feared you gwine spile my cunj'in'. You come down ter my house ter-night en do w'at I tells you, er I'll put a spell on you dat 'll make yo' ha'r fall out so you'll be bal', en yo' eyes drap out so you can't see, en yo teef fall out so you can't eat, en yo' years grow up so you can't heah. Wen you is foolin' wid a cunjuh 'oman lack me, you got ter min' yo' P's en Q's er dey'll be trouble sho' 'nuff.'

"So co'se Solomon went down ter Aun' Peggy's dat night, en she gun 'im a roasted sweet'n' 'tater.

"'You take dis yer sweet'n' 'tater,' sez she,—'I done goophered it 'speshly fer dat noo nigger, so you better not eat it yo'se'f er you'll wush you had n',—en slip off ter town, en fin' dat strange man, en gib 'im dis yer sweet'n' 'tater. He mus' eat it befo' mawnin', sho', ef he doan wanter be sol' erway ter Noo Orleens.'

"'But s'posen de patteroles ketch me, Aun' Peggy, w'at I gwine ter do?' sez Solomon.

"'De patteroles ain' gwine tech you, but ef you doan fin' dat nigger, I 'm gwine git you, en you'll fin' me wusser 'n de patteroles. Des hol' on a minute, en I'll sprinkle you wid some er dis mixtry out'n dis yer bottle, so de patteroles can't see you, en you kin rub yo' feet wid some er dis yer grease out'n dis go'd, so you kin run fas', en rub some un it on yo' eyes

so you kin see in de da'k; en den you mus' fin' dat noo nigger en gib 'im dis yer 'tater, er you gwine ter hab mo' trouble on yo' ban's 'n you eber had befo' in yo' life er eber will hab sence.'

"So Solomon tuk de sweet'n' 'tater en sta'ted up de road fas' ez he could go, en befo' long he retch' town. He went right 'long by de patteroles, en dey did n' 'pear ter notice 'im, en bimeby he foun' whar de strange nigger was kep', en he walked right pas' de gyard at de do' en foun' 'im. De nigger could n' see 'im, ob co'se, en he could n' 'a' seed de nigger in de da'k, ef it had n' be'n fer de stuff Aun' Peggy gun 'im ter rub on 'is eyes. De nigger wuz layin' in a co'nder, 'sleep, en Solomon des slip' up ter 'im, en hilt dat sweet'n' 'tater 'fo' de nigger's nose, en he des nach'ly retch' up wid his han', en tuk de 'tater en eat it in his sleep, widout knowin' it. Wen Solomon seed he 'd done eat de 'tater, he went back en tol' Aun' Peggy, en den went home ter his cabin ter sleep, 'way 'long 'bout two o'clock in de mawnin'.

"De nex' day wuz Sunday, en so de niggers had a little time ter deyse'ves. Solomon wuz kinder 'sturb' in his min' thinkin' 'bout his junesey w'at 'uz gone away, en wond'rin' w'at Aun' Peggy had ter do wid dat noo nigger; en he had sa'ntered up in de woods so 's ter be by hisse'f a little, en at de same time ter look atter a rabbit-trap he'd sot down in de aidge er de swamp, w'en who sh'd he see stan'in' unner a tree but a w'ite man.

"Solomon did n' knowed de w'ite man at fus', 'tel de w'ite man spoke up ter 'im.

"'Is dat you, Solomon?' sezee.

"Den Solomon reco'nized de voice.

"'Fer de Lawd's sake, Mars Jeems! is dat you?'

"'Yas, Solomon,' sez his marster, 'dis is me, er w'at's lef er me.'

"It wa'n't no wonder Solomon had n' knowed Mars Jeems at fus', fer he wuz dress' lack a po' w'ite man, en wuz barefooted, en look' monst'us pale en peaked, ez ef he'd des come th'oo a ha'd spell er sickness.

"'You er lookin' kinder po'ly, Mars Jeems,' sez Solomon. 'Is you be'n sick, suh?'

"'No, Solomon,' sez Mars Jeems, shakin' his head, en speakin' sorter slow en sad, 'I ain' be'n sick, but I's had a monst'us bad dream,—fac', a reg'lar, nach'ul nightmare. But tell me how things has be'n gwine on up ter de plantation sence I be'n gone, Solomon.'

"So Solomon up en tol' 'im 'bout de craps, en 'bout de hosses en de mules, en 'bout de cows en de hawgs. En w'en he 'mence' ter tell 'bout de noo nigger, Mars Jeems prick' up 'is yeahs en listen', en eve'y now en den he 'd say, 'Uh huh! uh huh!' en nod 'is head. En bimeby, w'en he'd ax' Solomon some mo' queshtuns, he sez, sezee:—

"'Now, Solomon, I doan want you ter say a wo'd ter nobody 'bout meetin' me heah, but I wants you ter slip up ter de house, en fetch me some clo's en some shoes,—I fergot ter tell you dat a man rob' me back yander on de road en swap' clo's wid me widout axin' me whuther er no,—but you neenter say nuffin 'bout dat, nuther. You go en fetch me some clo's heah, so nobody won't see you, en keep yo' mouf shet, en I 'll gib you a dollah.'

"Solomon wuz so 'stonish' he lack ter fell ober in his tracks, w'en Mars Jeems promus' ter gib 'im a dollah. Dey su't'nly wuz a change come ober Mars Jeems, w'en he offer' one er his niggers dat much money. Solomon 'mence' ter 'spec' dat Aun' Peggy's cunj'ation had be'n wukkin' monst'us strong.

"Solomon fotch Mars Jeems some clo's en shoes, en dat same eb'nin' Mars Jeems 'peared at de house, en let on lack he des

dat minute got home fum Robeson County. Mars Johnson was all ready ter talk ter 'im, but Mars Jeems sont 'im wo'd he wa'n't feelin' ve'y well dat night, en he'd see 'im ter-morrer.

"So nex' mawnin' atter breakfus' Mars Jeems sont fer de oberseah, en ax' 'im fer ter gib 'count er his styoa'dship. Ole Nick tol' Mars Jeems how much wuk be'n done, en got de books en showed 'im how much money be'n save'. Den Mars Jeems ax' 'im how de darkies be'n behabin', en Mars Johnson say dey be'n behabin' good, most un 'em, en dem w'at did n' behabe good at fus' change dey conduc' atter he got holt un 'em a time er two.

"'All,' sezee, "cep'n' de noo nigger Mistah Dunkin fotch ober heah en lef on trial, w'iles you wuz gone.'

"'Oh, yas,' 'lows Mars Jeems, 'tell me all 'bout dat noo nigger. I heared a little 'bout dat quare noo nigger las' night, en it wuz des too rediklus. Tell me all 'bout dat noo nigger.'

"So seein' Mars Jeems so good-na-chu'd 'bout it, Mars Johnson up en tol' 'im how he tied up de noo ban' de fus' day en gun 'im fo'ty 'ca'se he would n' tell 'im 'is name.

"'Ha, ha, ha!' sez Mars Jeems, laffin' fit ter kill, 'but dat is too funny fer any use. Tell me some mo' 'bout dat noo nigger.'

"So Mars Johnson went on en tol' 'im how he had ter starbe de noo nigger 'fo' he could make 'im take holt er a hoe.

"'Dat wuz de beatinis' notion fer a nigger,' sez Mars Jeems, 'puttin' on airs, des lack he wuz a w'ite man! En I reckon you did n' do nuffin ter 'im?'

"'Oh, no, suh,' sez de oberseah, grinnin' lack a chessy-cat, 'I did n' do nuffin but take de hide off'n 'im.'

"Mars Jeems lafft en lafft, 'tel it 'peared lack he wuz des gwine ter bu'st. 'Tell me some mo' 'bout dat noo nigger, oh, tell me some mo'. Dat noo nigger int'rusts me, he do, en dat is a fac'.'

"Mars Johnson did n' quite un'erstan' w'y Mars Jeems sh'd make sich a great 'miration 'bout de noo nigger, but co'se he want' ter please de gent'eman w'at hi'ed 'im, en so he 'splain' all 'bout how many times he had ter cowhide de noo nigger, en how he made 'im do tasks twicet ez big ez some er de yuther han's, en how he 'd chain 'im up in de ba'n at night en feed 'im on co'n-bread en water.

"'Oh! but you is a monst'us good oberseah; you is de bes' oberseah in dis county, Mistah Johnson,' sez Mars Jeems, w'en de oberseah got th'oo wid his tale; 'en dey ain' nebber be'n no nigger-breaker lack you roun' heah befo'. En you desarbes great credit fer sendin' dat nigger 'way befo' you sp'ilt 'im fer de market. Fac', you is sech a monst'us good oberseah, en you is got dis yer plantation in sech fine shape, dat I reckon I doan need you no mo'. You is got dese yer darkies so well train' dat I 'spec' I kin run 'em myse'f fum dis time on. But I does wush you had 'a' hilt on ter dat noo nigger 'tel I got home, fer I 'd 'a' lack ter 'a' seed 'im, I su't'nly should.'

"De oberseah wuz so 'stonish' he did n' ha'dly know w'at ter say, but fin'lly he ax' Mars Jeems ef he would n' gib'im a riccommen' fer ter git ernudder place.

"'No, suh,' sez Mars Jeems, 'somehow er 'nuther I doan lack yo' looks sence I come back dis time, en I'd much ruther you would n' stay roun' heah. Fac', I's feared ef I 'd meet you alone in de woods some time, I mought wanter ha'm you. But layin' dat aside, I be'n lookin' ober dese yer books er yo'n w'at you kep' w'iles I wuz 'way, en fer a yeah er so back, en dere's some figgers w'at ain' des cl'ar ter me. I ain' got no time fer ter talk 'bout

'em now, but I 'spec' befo' I settles wid you fer dis las' mont', you better come up heah ter-morrer, atter I's look' de books en 'counts ober some mo', en den we'll straighten ou' business all up.'

"Mars Jeems 'lowed atterwa'ds dat he wuz des shootin' in de da'k w'en he said dat 'bout de books, but howsomeber, Mars Nick Johnson lef dat naberhood 'twix' de nex' two suns, en nobody roun' dere nebber seed hide ner hair un 'im sence. En all de darkies t'ank de Lawd, en 'lowed it wuz a good riddance er bad rubbage.

"But all dem things I done tol' you ain' nuffin 'side'n de change w'at come ober Mars Jeems fum dat time on. Aun' Peggy's goopher had made a noo man un 'im enti'ely. De nex' day atter he come back, he tol' de han's dey neenter wuk on'y fum sun ter sun, en he cut dey tasks down so dey did n' nobody hab ter stan' ober 'em wid a rawhide er a hick'ry. En he 'lowed ef de niggers want ter hab a dance in de big ba'n any Sad'day night, dey mought hab it. En bimeby, w'en Solomon seed how good Mars Jeems wuz, he ax' 'im ef he would n' please sen' down ter de yuther plantation fer his junesey. Mars Jeems say su't'nly, en gun Solomon a pass en a note ter de oberseah on de yuther plantation, en sont Solomon down ter Robeson County wid a hoss en buggy fer ter fetch his junesey back. Wen de niggers see how fine Mars Jeems gwine treat 'em, dey all tuk ter sweethea'tin' en juneseyin' en singin' en dancin', en eight er ten couples got married, en bimeby eve'ybody 'mence' ter say Mars Jeems McLean got a finer plantation, en slicker-lookin' niggers, en dat he 'uz makin' mo' cotton en co'n, dan any yuther gent'eman in de county. En Mars Jeems's own junesey, Miss Libbie, heared 'bout de noo gwines-on on Mars Jeems's plantation, en she change' her min' 'bout Mars Jeems en tuk 'im back ag'in, en 'fo' long dey had a fine weddin', en all de darkies had a big feas', en dey wuz fiddlin' en dancin' en funnin' en frolic'in' fum sundown 'tel mawnin'."

"And they all lived happy ever after," I said, as the old man reached a full stop.

"Yas, suh," he said, interpreting my remarks as a question, "dey did. Solomon useter say," he added, "dat Aun' Peggy's goopher had turnt Mars Jeems ter a nigger, en dat dat noo ban' wuz Mars Jeems hisse'f. But co'se Solomon did n' das' ter let on 'bout w'at he 'spicioned, en ole Aun' Peggy would 'a' 'nied it ef she had be'n ax', fer she 'd 'a' got in trouble sho', ef it 'uz knowed she 'd be'n cunj'in' de w'ite folks.

"Dis yer tale goes ter show," concluded Julius sententiously, as the man came up and announced that the spring was ready for us to get water, "dat w'ite folks w'at is so ha'd en stric', en doan make no 'lowance fer po' ign'ant niggers w'at ain' had no chanst ter l'arn, is li'ble ter hab bad dreams, ter say de leas', en dat dem w'at is kin' en good ter po' people is sho' ter prosper en git 'long in de worl'."

"That is a very strange story, Uncle Julius," observed my wife, smiling, "and Solomon's explanation is quite improbable."

"Yes, Julius," said I, "that was powerful goopher. I am glad, too, that you told us the moral of the story; it might have escaped us otherwise. By the way, did you make that up all by yourself?"

The old man's face assumed an injured look, expressive more of sorrow than of anger, and shaking his head he replied:—

"No, suh, I heared dat tale befo' you er Mis' Annie dere wuz bawn, suh. My mammy tol' me dat tale w'en I wa'n't mo' d'n knee-high ter a hopper-grass."

I drove to town next morning, on some business, and did not return until noon; and after dinner I had to visit a neighbor, and did

not get back until supper-time. I was smoking a cigar on the back piazza in the early evening, when I saw a familiar figure carrying a bucket of water to the barn. I called my wife.

"My dear," I said severely, "what is that rascal doing here? I thought I discharged him yesterday for good and all."

"Oh, yes," she answered, "I forgot to tell you. He was hanging round the place all the morning, and looking so down in the mouth, that I told him that if he would try to do better, we would give him one more chance. He seems so grateful, and so really in earnest in his promises of amendment, that I'm sure you'll not regret taking him back."

I was seriously enough annoyed to let my cigar go out. I did not share my wife's rose-colored hopes in regard to Tom; but as I did not wish the servants to think there was any conflict of authority in the household, I let the boy stay.

OATS FOR THE WOMAN

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Humoresque*, by Fannie Hurst

That women who toil not neither do they spin might know the feel of fabrics so cunningly devised that they lay to the flesh like the inner petals of buds, three hundred and fifty men, women, and children contrived, between strikes, to make the show-rooms of the Kessler Costume Company, Incorporated, a sort of mauve and mirrored Delphi where buyers from twenty states came to invoke forecast of the mood of skirts, the caprice of sleeves, and the rumored flip to the train. Before these flips and moods, a gigantic industry held semi-annual pause, destinies of lace-factories trembling before a threatened season of strictly tailor-mades, velvet-looms slowing at the shush of taffeta. When woman would be sleazy, petticoat manufacturers went overnight into an oblivion from which there might or might not be returning. The willow plume waved its day, making and unmaking merchants.

Destiny loves thus to spring from acorn beginnings. Helen smiled, and Troy fell. Roast pork, and I doubt not then and there the apple sauce, became a national institution because a small boy burnt his fingers.

That is why, out from the frail love of women for the flesh and its humors, and because for the webby cling of chiffon too often no price is too high, the Kessler Costume Company employed, on the factory side of the door, the three hundred and fifty sewers and cutters, not one of whose monthly wage could half buy the real-lace fichu or the painted-chiffon frock of his own handiwork.

On the show-room side of the door, painted mauve within and not without, _mannequins_, so pink finger-tipped, so tilted of instep, and so bred in the thrust to the silhouette, trailed these sleazy products of thick ringers across mauve-colored carpet and before the appraising eyes of twenty states.

Often as not, smoke rose in that room from the black cigar of the Omaha Store, Omaha, or Ladies' Wear, Cleveland. In season, and particularly during the frenzied dog-days of August, when the fate of the new waist-line or his daring treatment of cloth of silver hung yet in the balance, and the spirit of Detroit must be browbeaten by the dictum of the sleeveless thing in evening frocks, Leon Kessler himself smoked a day-long chain of cigarettes, lighting one off the other.

In the model-room, a long, narrow slit, roaringly ventilated by a whirling machine, lined in frocks suspended from hangers, and just wide enough for two very perfect thirty-sixes to stand abreast, August fell heavily. So heavily that occasionally a cloak-model, her lot to show next December's conceit in theater wraps, fainted on the show-dais; or a cloth-of-gold evening gown, donned for the twentieth time that sweltering day, would suddenly, with its model, crumple, a glittering huddle, to the floor.

Upon Miss Hattie Becker, who within the narrow slit had endured eight of these Augusts with only two casual faints and a swoon or two nipped in the bud, this ninth August came in so furiously that, sliding out of her sixth showing of a cloth-of-silver and blue-fox opera wrap, a shivering that amounted practically to chill took hold of her.

"Br-r-r!" she said, full of all men's awe at the carbon-dioxide paradox. "I'm so hot I'm cold!"

Miss Clarice Delehanty slid out of a shower of tulle-of-gold dancing-frock and into an Avenue gown of rough serge. The tail of a very arched eyebrow threatened, and then ran down in a black rill.

"If Niagara Falls was claret lemonade,
You'd see me beat it to a watery grave."

"That'll be enough canary-talk out of you, Clare. Hand me my shirt-waist there off the hook."

"Didn't Kess say we had to show Keokuk the line before lunch?"

"If the King of England was buying ermine sport coats this morning, I wouldn't show 'em before I had a cold cut and a long drink in me. Hurry! Hand me my waist, Clare, before the girls come in from showing the bridesmaid line."

Miss Delehanty flung the garment down the narrow length of the room.

"Minneapolis don't know it, but after this showing he's going to blow me to the frappiest little lunch on the Waldorf roof."

Miss Becker buttoned her flimsy blouse with three pearl beads down its

front, wiping constantly at a constantly dampening brow.

"You'd shove over the Goddess of Liberty if you thought she had her foot on a meal ticket."

"Yes; and if I busted her, you could build a new one on the lunch money you've saved in your time."

"Waldorf! You've got a fine chance with Minneapolis. You mean the Automat, and two spoons for the ice-cream."

Miss Delehanty adjusted a highly eccentric hat, a small green velvet, outrageously tilted off the rear of its _bandeau_, and a wide black streamer flowing down over one shoulder. It was the match to the explosive effect of the _trotteur_ gown. She was Fashion's humoresque, except that Fashion has no sense of humor. Very presently Minneapolis would appraise her at two hundred and seventy-five as is. Miss Delehanty herself came cheaper.

"Say, Hattie, don't let being an old man's darling go to your head. The grandchildren may issue an injunction."

A flare of crimson rushed immediately over Miss Becker's face, spreading down into her neck.

"You let him alone! He's a darn sight better than anything I've seen you girls picking for yourselves. You never met a man in your life whose name wasn't Johnnie. You couldn't land a John in a million years."

Miss Delehanty raised her face from over a shoe-buckle. A stare began to set in, as obviously innocent as a small boy's between spitballs.

"Well, who said anything about old St. Louis, I'd like to know?"

"You did, and you leave him alone! What do you know about a real man? You'd pass up a Ford ride to sit still in a pasteboard limousine every time!"

"Well, of all things! Did I say anything?"

"Yes, you did!"

"Why, for my part, he can show you a good time eight nights in the week and Sundays, too."

"He 'ain't got grandchildren--if you want to know it."

"Did I say he had?"

"Yes, you did!"

"Why, I don't blame any girl for showing grandpa a good time."

"You could consider yourself darn lucky, Clarice Delehanty, if one half as good ever--"

"Ask the girls if I don't always say old St. Louis is all to the good. Three or four years ago, right after his wife died, I said to Ada, I said--"

A head showed suddenly through the lining side of the mauve portières, blue-eyed, blue-shaved, and with a triple ripple of black hair trained backward.

"Hurry along there with fifty-seven, Delehanty! Heyman's got to see the line and catch that six-two Chicago flier."

Miss Delehanty fell into pose, her profile turned back over one shoulder.

"Tell him to chew a clove; it's good for breathless haste," she said, disappearing through portières into the show-room.

Miss Becker thrust herself from a hastily-found-out aperture, patting, with final touch, her belt into place.

"Have I been asking you for five years, Kess, to knock before you poke your head in on us girls?"

Mr. Leon Kessler appeared then fully between the curtains, letting them drape heavily behind him. Gotham garbs her poets and her brokers, her employers and employees, in the national pin-stripes and sack coat. Except for a few pins stuck upright in his coat lapel, Mr. Kessler might have been his banker or his salesman. Typical New-Yorker is the pseudo, half enviously bestowed upon his kind by _hinter_ America. It signifies a bi-weekly manicure, femininely administered; a hotel lobbyist who can outstare a seatless guest; the sang-froid to add up a dinner check; spats. When Mr. Kessler tipped, it did not clink; it rustled. In theater, at each interval between acts, he piled out over ladies' knees and returned chewing a mint. He journeyed twice a year to a famous Southern spa, and there won or lost his expenses. He regarded Miss Becker, peering at her around the fluff of a suspended frock of pink tulle.

"What's the idea, Becker? Keokuk wants to see you in the wrap line."

Miss Becker swallowed hard, jamming down and pinning into a small taffy-colored turban, her hair, the exact shade of it, escaping in

scallops. Carefully powdered-out lines of her face seemed to emerge suddenly through the conserved creaminess of her skin. Thirty-four, in its unguarded moments, will out. Miss Becker had almost detained twenty's waistline and twenty-two's ardent thrust of face. It was only the indentures of time that had begun to tell slightly--indentures that powder could not putty out. There was a slight bagginess of throat where the years love to eat in first, and out from the eyes a spray of fine lines. It was these lines that came out now indubitably.

"If you want me to lay down on you, Kess, for sure, just ask me to show the line again before lunch. I'm about ready to keel. And you can't put me off again. I'm ready, and you got to come now."

He dug so deeply into his pockets that his sleeves crawled up.

"Say, look here. I've got my business to attend to, and, when my trade's in town, my trade comes first. See? Take off and show Keokuk a few numbers. I want him to see that chinchilla drape."

She reached out, closing her hand over his arm.

"I'll show him the whole line, Kess, when we're back from lunch. I got to talk to you, I tell you. You put me off yesterday and the day before, and this--this is the last."

"The last what?"

"Please, Kess, if you only run over to Rinehardt's with me. I got to tell you something. Something about me and--and--"

He regarded her in some perplexity. "Tell it to me here. Now!"

"I can't. The girls'll be swarming in any minute. I can't get you anywheres but lunch. It's the first thirty minutes of your time I've asked in five years, Kess--is that little enough? Let Cissie show Keokuk the blouses till we get back. It's something, Kess, I can't put off. Kess, please!"

Her face was so close to him and so eager that he turned to back out.

"Wait for me at the Thirty-first Street entrance," he said, "and I'll shoot you across to Rinehardt's."

She caught up her small silk hand-bag and ran out toward the elevators. Down in Thirty-first Street a wave of heat met, almost overpowering her. New York, enervated from sleepless nights on fire-escapes and in bedrooms opening on areaways, moved through it at half-speed, hugging the narrow shade of buildings. Infant mortality climbed with the thermometer. In Fifth Avenue, cool, high bedrooms were boarded and

empty. In First Avenue, babies lay naked on the floor, snuffing out for want of oxygen.

Across that man-made Grand Cañon men leap sometimes, but seldom. Mothers whose babies lie naked on the floor look out across it, damning.

Out into this flaying heat Miss Becker stepped gingerly, almost immediately rejoined by Mr. Leon Kessler, crowningly touched with the correct thing in straw sailors.

"Get a move on," he said, guiding her across the soft asphalt.

In Rinehardt's, one of a thousand such _Rathskeller_ retreats designed for a city that loves to dine in fifteen languages, the noonday cortège of summer widowers had not yet arrived. Waiters moved through the dim, pink-lit gloom, dressing their tables temptingly cool and white, dipping ice out from silver buckets into thin tumblers.

They seated themselves beneath a ceiling fan, Miss Becker's taffy-colored scallops stirring in the scurry of air.

"Lordy!" she said, closing her eyes and pressing her finger-tips against them, "I wish I could lease this spot for the summer!"

He pushed a menu-card toward her. "What'll you have? There's plenty under the 'ready to serve.'"

She peeled out of her white-silk gloves.

"Some cold cuts and a long ice-tea."

He ordered after her and more at length, then lighted a cigarette.

"Well?" he said, waving out a match.

She leaned forward, already designing with her fork on the table-cloth.

"Kess, can you guess?"

"Come on with it!"

"Have you--noticed anything?"

"Say, I'd have a sweet time keeping up with you girls!"

She looked at him now evenly between the eyes.

"You kept up with me pretty close for three years, didn't you?"

"Say, you knew what you were doing!"

"I--I'm not so sure of that by a long shot. I--I was fed up with the most devilish kind of promises there are. The kind you was too smart to put in words or--or in writing. You--you only looked 'em."

"I suppose you was kidnapped one dark and stormy night while the villain pursued you, eh? Is that it?"

"Oh, what's the use--rehashing! After that time at Atlantic City and--and then the--flat, it--it just seemed the way I felt about you then--that nothing you wanted could be wrong. I guess I knew what I was doing all right, or, if I didn't, I ought to have. I was rotten--or I couldn't have done it, I guess. Only, deep inside of me I was waiting and banking on you like--like poor little Cissie is now. And you knew it; you knew it all them three years."

"Say, did you get me over here to--"

"I only hope to God when you're done with Cissie you'll--"

"You let me take care of my own affairs. If it comes right down to it, there's a few things I could tell you, girl, that ain't so easy to listen to. Let's get off the subject while the going's good."

"Oh, anybody that plays as safe as you--"

He raised his voice, shoving back his chair. "Well, if you want me to clear out of this place quicker than you can bat your eye, you just--"

"No, no, Kess! 'Sh-h-h-h!"

"If there ever was a girl in my place had a square deal, that girl's been you."

"'Square deal!' Because after I held on and--ate out my heart for three years, you didn't--take away my job, too? Somebody ought to pin a Carnegie medal on you!"

"You've held down a twenty-dollar-a-week job season in and season out, when there've been times it didn't even pay for the ink it took to write you on the pay-roll."

"There's nothing I ever got out of you I didn't earn three times over."

"A younger figure than yours is getting to be wouldn't hurt the line any, you know. It's because I make it a rule not to throw off the old girls when their waist-lines begin to spread that makes you so grateful, is it? There's not a firm in town keeps on a girl after she begins to

heavy up. If you got to know why I took you off the dress line and put you in the wraps, it's because I seen you widening into a thirty-eight, and a darn poor one at that. I can sell two wraps off Cissie to one off you. You're getting hippy, girl, and, since you started the subject, you can be darn glad you know where your next week's salary's coming from."

She was reddening so furiously that even her earlobes, their tips escaping beneath the turban, were tinged.

"Maybe I--I'm getting hippy, Kess; but it'll take more than anything you can ever do for me to make up for--"

"Gad!" he said, flipping an ash in some disgust, "I wish I had a ten-cent piece for every one since!"

"Oh," she cried, her throat jerking, "you eat what you just said! You eat it, because you know it ain't so!"

"Now look here," he said, straightening up suddenly, "I don't know what your game is, but if you're here to stir up the old dust that's been laid for five years--"

"No, no, Kess! It's only that--what I got to tell you--I--it makes a difference, I--"

"What?"

"There's nothing in these years since, I swear to God, or in the years before, that I got to be ashamed of!"

"All right! All right!"

"If ever a girl came all of a sudden to her senses, it was me. If ever a girl has lived a quiet life, picking herself up and brushing the dust off, it's been me. Oh, I don't say I 'ain't been entertained by the trade--I didn't dodge my job--but it's been a straight kind of a time--straight!"

"I'm not asking for an alibi, Becker. What's the idea?"

"Kess," she said, leaning forward, with tears popping out in her eyes, "I.W. Goldstone has asked me to marry him."

He laid down his roll in the act of buttering it, gazing across at her with his knife upright in his hand.

"Huh?"

"Night before last, Kess, in the poppy-room at Shalif's."

"Are you crazy?"

"It's the God's truth, Kess. He's begging me for an answer by to-night, before he goes back home."

"I.W. Goldstone, of Goldstone & Auer, ladies' wear?"

She nodded, her hand to her throat.

"Well, I'll be strung up!"

"He--he says, Kess, it's been on his mind for a year and a half, ever since his spring trip a year ago. He wants to take me back with him, Kess, home."

"Whew!" said Mr. Kessler, wiping his brow and the back of his collar.

"You're no more surprised than me, Kess. I--I nearly fell off the Christmas tree."

"Good Lord! Why, his wife--he had her in the store it seems yesterday!"

"She's been dead four years and seven months, Kess."

"Old I.W. and you!"

"He's only fifty-two, Kess; I'm thirty-four."

"I.W. Goldstone!"

"I know it. I can't realize it, neither."

"Why, he's worth two hundred thousand, if he's worth a cent!"

"I know it, Kess."

"The old man's stringing you, girl. His kind stop, look, and listen."

"He's not stringing me! I tell you he's begging me to marry him and go back home with him. He's even told his--daughter about me."

"Good Lord--little Effie! I was out there once when she was a kid. Stopped off on my way to Hot Springs. They live in a kind of park--Forest Park Street or something or other. Why, I've done business with Goldstone & Auer for fifteen years, and my father before me! Good Lord!"

"What'll I do, Kess?"

"So that's the size of the fish you went out and landed!"

"I didn't! I didn't! He's been asking me out the last three trips, and post-cards in between, but I never thought nothing of it."

"Why, he can't get away with this!"

"Why?"

"They won't stand for it out in that Middle West town. He's the head of a big business. He's got a grown daughter."

"He's got her fixed, Kess--settled on her."

"Hattie Becker, Mrs. I.W. Goldstone! Gad! can you beat it? Can't you just see me, when I come out to St. Louis pretty soon, having dinner out at Mrs. I.W. Goldstone's house? Say, am I seeing things?"

"What'll I do, Kess? What'll I do?"

"I tell you that you can't get away with it, girl. The old man's getting childish; they'll have to have him restrained. Why, the woman he was married to for twenty years, Lenie Goldstone, never even seen a skirt-dance. I remember once he brought her to New York and then wouldn't let her see a cabaret show. He won't even buy sleeveless models for his French room."

"I tell you, Kess, he'll take me to Jersey to-morrow and marry me, if I give the word."

"Not a chance!"

"I tell you yes. That's why I got to see you. I got to tell him to-night, Kess. He--goes back to-morrow."

He regarded her slowly, watching her throat where it throbbed.

"Well, what are you going to do?"

"I--I don't know."

"Where do you stand with him? Sweet sixteen and never been kissed?"

"He--he don't ask questions, Kess. I--I'm his ideal, he says, of the--kind of--woman can take up for him where his wife left off. He says we're alike in everything but looks, and that a man who was happy in marriage like him can't be happy outside of it. He--he's sized up pretty well the way I live, and--and--he knows I don't expect too much out of

life no more. Just a quiet kind of team-work, he puts it--pulling together fifty-fifty, and somebody's hand to hold on to when old fellow Time hits you a whack in the knees from behind. But he ain't old when he talks that way, Kess; he--he's beautiful to me."

"Does he wear a mask when he makes love?"

"He's got a fine face."

"So that's the way you're playing it, is it? Love-stuff?"

"Oh, I've had all the love-stuff knocked out of me. Three years of eating out my heart is about all the love-stuff I can handle for a while. He don't want that in a woman. I don't want it in him. He's just a plain, good man I never in my life could dream of having. A good home in a good town where life ain't like a red-eyed devil ready to hit in deep between the shoulder-blades. I know why he says he can see his wife in me. He knows I'm the kind was cut out for that kind of life--home and kitchen and my own parsley in my own back yard. He knows, if he marries me, carpet slippers seven nights in the week is my speed. I never want to see a 'roof,' or a music-show, or a cabaret again to the day I die. He knows I'll fit in home like a goldfish in its bowl. Life made a mistake with me, and it's going to square itself. It's fate, Kess; that's what it is--fate!"

She clapped her hands to her face, sobbing down into them.

He glanced about him in quick and nervous concern.

"Pull yourself together there, Becker; we're in a public place."

"If only I could go to him and tell him."

"Well, you can't."

"It's not you that keeps me. Only, I know that with his kind of man and at his age, a woman is--is one thing or another and that ends it. With a grown daughter, he wouldn't--couldn't--he's too set in his ways to know how it was with me--and--what'll I do, Kess?"

"Say, I'm not going to stand in your light, if that's what's eating you. If you can get away with it, I don't wish you nothing but well. Looks to me like all right, if you want to make the try. I'll even come and break bread with you when I go out to see my Middle West trade pretty soon. That's the kind of a hairpin I am."

"It's like I keep saying to myself, Kess. If--if he'd ask me anything, it--it would be different. He--he says he never felt so satisfied that a woman had the right stuff in her. And I have! There's nothing in the

world can take that away from me. I can give him what he wants. I know I can. Why, the way I'll make up to that little girl out there and love her to death! I ask so little, Kess--just a decent life and rest--peace. I'm tired. I want to let myself get fat. I'm built that way, to get fat. It was nothing but diet gave me the anaemia last summer. He says he wants me to plump out. Perfect thirty-six don't mean nothing in his life except for the trade. No more rooming-houses with the kitchenette in the bath-room. A kitchen, he says, Kess, half the size of the show-room, with a butler's pantry. He likes to play pinochle at night, he says, next to the sitting-room fire. He tried to learn me the rules of the game the other night in the poppy-room. It's easy. His first wife was death on flowers. She used to train roses over their back fence. He loved to see her there. He wants me to like to grow them. He wants to take me back to a home of my own and peace, where life can't look to a girl like a devil with horns. He wants to take me home. What'll I do, Kess? Please, please, what'll I do?"

He was rather inarticulate, but reached out to pat her arm. "Go--to it--girl, and--God bless you!"

* * * * *

Forest Park Boulevard comes in sootily, smokestacks, gas-tanks, and large areas of scarred vacant lots boding ill enough for its destiny. But after a while, where Taylor Avenue bisects, it begins to retrieve itself. Here it is parked down its center, a narrow strip set out in shrubs, and on either side, traffic, thus divided, flows evenly up and down a macadamized roadway. In summer the shrubs thicken, half concealing one side of Forest Park Boulevard from its other. Houses suddenly take on detached and architectural importance, often as not a gravel driveway dividing lawns, and out farther still, where the street eventually flows into Forest Park, the Italian Renaissance invades, somebody's rococo money's worth.

I.W. Goldstone's home, so near the park that, in spring, the smell of lilacs and gasolene hovers over it, pretends not to period or dynasty. Well detached, and so far back from the sidewalk that interlocking trees conceal its second-story windows, an alcove was frankly a bulge on its red-brick exterior. Where the third-floor bath-room, an afterthought, led off the hallway, it jutted out, a shingled protuberance on the left end of the house. A tower swelled out of its front end, and all year round geraniums and boxed climbing vines bloomed in its three stories.

Across a generous ledge of veranda, more vines grew quite furiously, reaching their height and then growing down upon themselves. Behind those vines, and so cunningly concealed by them that not even the white wrapper could flash through to the passerby, Mrs. I.W. Goldstone, in a chair that would rock rhythmically with her, loved to sit in the first dusk of evening, pleasantly idle. A hose twirling on the lawn spun up

the smell of green, abetted by similar whirlings down the wide vista of adjoining lawns. Occasionally, a prideful and shirt-sleeved landed proprietor wielded his own hose, flushing the parched sidewalk or shooting spray against hot bricks that drank in thirstily.

As Mrs. Goldstone rocked she smiled, tilting herself backward off the balls of her feet. The years had cropped out in her suddenly, surprisingly, and with a great deal of geniality. The taffy cast to her hair had backslid to ashes of roses. Uncorseted and in the white wrapper, she was quite frankly widespread, her hips fitting in tight between the chair-arms, and her knees wide.

A screen door snapped sharply shut on its spring, Mr. I.W. Goldstone emerging. There was a great rotundity to his silhouette, the generous outward curve to his waist-line giving to his figure a swayback erectness, the legs receding rather short and thin from the bay of waistcoat.

"Hattie?"

"Here I am, I.W."

"I looped up the sweet-peas."

"Good!"

He sat down beside her, wide-kneed, too, the smooth top of his head and his shirt sleeves spots in the darkness.

"Get dressed a little, Hattie, and I'll get out the car and ride you out to Forest Park Highlands."

She slowed, but did not cease to rock.

"It's so grand at home this evening, I.W. I'm too comfortable to even dress myself."

He felt for her hand in the gloom; she put it out to him.

"You huck home too much, Hattie."

"I guess I do, honey; but it's like I can never get enough of it. The first year I was a home body, and the second and third year I'm two of 'em."

"That's something you'll never hear me complain of in a woman. There's a world of good in the woman who loves her home."

"It's not that, I.W. It's because I--I never dreamed that there

was anything like this coming to me. To live around in rooms, year in and year out, in the lonesomest town in the world, and then, all of a sudden, a home of your own and a hubby of your own and a daughter of your own, why--I dunno--sometimes when I think of them days it's like life was a big red devil with horns and a tail that I'd got away from. Why, if it was to get me again, I--I dunno, honey, I dunno--I--just--dunno."

"You're a good woman, Hattie, and you deserve all that's coming to you. I wish it was more."

"And you're a good man--they don't come no better."

"I'm satisfied with my bargain."

"And me with mine, honey, if--if you don't mind the talk."

"S-ay, this town would talk if you cut its tongue out."

"You're my nice old hubby!"

"If I ever was a little uneasy it was in the beginning, Hattie--the girl--those things don't always turn out."

"It's her as much as me, I.W. She's the sweetest little thing."

"Never seen the like the way you took hold, though. I'll bet there's not one woman in a hundred could have worked it out easier."

"That's right--kid me to death."

"'Kid,' she says, the minute I tell her the truth."

"Put on your cap, I.W.; it's getting damp."

He felt under the chair-cushions, drawing out and adjusting a black skull-cap.

"Want to go to the picture-show awhile, Hattie?"

"No. When Lizzie's done the dishes, I want to set some dough."

"Let's walk, then, a little. I ate too much supper."

"Just in the side yard, I.W. It's a shame the way I don't dress evenings."

"S-ay, in your own home, shouldn't you have your own comfort? You can take it from me, Hattie, no matter what Effie tells you, you're twice

the looking woman with some skin on your bones. I want my wife when she sits down to table she should not look blue-faced when the gravy is passed. Maybe it's not the style, but if it suits your old man, we should worry who else it suits."

"It's not right, I.W., but I love it--this feeling at home for--for good." She rose out of the low mound she had made in the chair, tucking up the white wrapper at both sides. "Come; let's walk in the side yard."

A narrow strip of asphalt ran across the housefrontage, turning in a generous elbow and then back the depth of the lot. They paced it quietly in the gloom, arm in arm, and their voices under darkness.

"Next month is my New York trip. All of a sudden Effie begs I should take her. We'll all go. What you say, Hattie? It'll do us good."

"You take the kid, I.W. Lizzie needs watching. Yesterday I had to make her do the whole butler's pantry over. She just naturally ain't clean."

"You got such luck with your roses, Hattie; it's wonderful!"

They were beneath a climbing bush of them that ran along, glorifying a wooden fence.

She pulled a fan of them to her face. "M-m-m-m!"

"I must spray for worms to-morrow," he said.

They resumed their soft walking in the gloom. "Where's Effie?"

"Telephoning."

"I ask you, is it a shame a child should hang on to the telephone an hour at a time? Fifty minutes since she was interrupted from supper she's been there."

"What's the harm in a young girl telephoning, I.W.? All young folks like to gad over the wire."

"What can a girl have to say over the telephone for fifty minutes? Altogether in my life I never talked that long into the telephone."

"Let the child alone, I.W."

"Who can she get to listen to her for fifty minutes?"

"Birdie Harberger usually calls up at this time."

"Always at supper-time! Never in my life has that child sat down at the

table it don't ring in our faces. The next time what it happens you can take sides with her all you want, not one step does she move till she's finished with her supper."

"As easy with her as you are, I.W., just as unreasonable you can get."

"On the stairs-landing for an hour a child should giggle into the telephone! I'm ashamed for the operators. You take sides with her yet."

"I don't, I.W.; only--"

"You do!"

A patch of light from an upper window sprang then across their path.

"She's in her room now, I.W.!" cried Mrs. Goldstone. "She hasn't been telephoning all this time at all. Now, crosspatch!"

"You know much! Can't you see she just lit up? Effie!"

A voice came down to them, clear and with a quality to it like the ring of thin glass.

"Coming, pop!"

The light flashed out again, and in a length of time that could only have meant three steps at a bound she was around the elbow of the asphalt walk, a coat dangling off one arm, her summery skirts flying backward and her head ardently forward.

"You'll never guess!"

She flung herself between the two of them, linking into each of their elbows.

"By my watch, Effie, fifty minutes! If it happens again that you get rung up supper-time, I--"

"It was Leon Kessler, pop; he didn't leave on the six-two. Can you beat it? Down at the station he got to thinking of me and turned back. Oh, my golly! how the boys love me!"

She was jumping now on the tips of her toes, her black curls bouncing.

"You don't tell me!" said Mr. Goldstone. "To-day in the store he says he must be back in New York by Monday morning."

She thrust her face outward, its pink-and-white vividness very close to his.

"Is my daddy's daughter going out in a seventy horse-power to Delmar Garden? She is!"

"Them New York boys spend too much money on the girls when they come. They spoil them for the home young men."

"Can I help it if he couldn't tear himself away?"

"S-ay, don't fool yourself! I said to him to-day he should stay over Sunday. After the bill of goods I bought from him this morning, and the way he only comes out to see his trade once in five or six years, he should stay and mix with them a little longer. That fellow knows good business."

She turned her face with a fling of curls to the right of her, linking closer into the soft arm there.

"Listen to him, Mamma Hat! Let's shove a brick house over on him."

When Mrs. Goldstone finally spoke there was a depth to her voice that seemed to create sudden quiet.

"Effie, Effie, why didn't you let him go?"

"Let him? Did I tie any strings to him? I said good-by to him in the store this afternoon. Can I help it that the boys love me? Why didn't I let him go, she says!"

Her father pinched her slyly at that. "_Echta_ fresh kid," he said.

To her right, the hand at her arm clung closer.

"Effie, you--you're so young, honey. Leon Kessler's an old-timer--"

"I hate kids. Give me a _man_ every time. I like them when they've got enough sense to--"

"Why didn't you let him go, Effie? Ain't I right, I.W.? Ain't I right?"

"S-ay, what's the difference if he likes to show her a good time? If I was a young man, I wouldn't pass her up myself."

"But, I.W., she's--so young!"

"Who's young? I'm nineteen, going on--"

"You've been running with him all the three days he's been here, honey. What's the use getting yourself talked about?"

"Well, any girl in town would be glad to get herself talked about if Leon Kessler was rushing her."

"Effie, I won't let you--I won't--"

Miss Goldstone unhinged her arm, jerking it free in anger.

"Well, I like that!"

"Effie, I--"

"You ain't my boss!"

"Effie!"

"But, papa, she--"

There was a booming in Mr. Goldstone's voice and a suddenly projected vibrancy.

"You apologize to your mother--this minute! You talk to your mother the way you know she's to be talked to!"

"I.W., she didn't--"

"You hear me!"

"I.W.! Don't holler at her; she--"

"She ain't your boss? Well, she just is your boss! You take back them words and say you're sorry! You apologize to your mother!" Immediate sobs were rumbling up through Miss Goldstone.

"Well, she--I--I didn't do anything. She's down on him. She--"

"Oh, Effie, would I say anything if it wasn't for your own good?"

"You--you were down on him from the start!"

"Effie darling, you must be mad! Would I say anything if it wasn't for our girl's good to--"

"I--oh, Mamma Hat, I'm sorry, darling! I never meant a word. I didn't! I didn't, darling!"

They embraced there in the shrouding darkness, the tears flowing.

"Oh, Effie--Effie!"

"I didn't mean one word I said, darling! I just get nasty like that before I know it. I didn't mean it!"

"My own Effie!"

"My darling Mamma Hat!"

In the shadow of a flowering shrub Mr. Goldstone stood by, mopping. Mrs. Goldstone took the small face between her hands, peering down into it.

"Effie, Effie, don't let--"

Just beyond the enclosing hedge, a motor-car drew up, honking, at the curb, two far-flung paths of light whitening the street and a disused iron negro-boy hitching-post. Miss Goldstone reared back.

"That's him!"

"Effie!"

"Let me go, dearie; let me go!"

"But, Effie--"

"Say, Hattie, I don't want to butt in, but it don't hurt the child should go riding a little while out by Delmar Garden--a man that can handle a car like Leon Kessler. Anyways, it don't pay to hurt the firm's feelings."

There was a constant honking now at the curb, and violent throbbing of engine.

"But, I.W.--"

"Popsie darling, I'll be back early. Mamma Hat, please!"

"Your mother says yes, baby. Tell Kess he should come for Sunday dinner to-morrow."

She was a white streak across the grass, her nervous feet flying. Almost instantly the honk of a horn came streaming back, faint, fainter.

Left standing there, Goldstone was instantly solicitous of his wife, feeling along her arm up under the loose sleeve.

"It don't pay, Hattie, to hurt Kessler's feelings, and, anyhow, what's the difference just so we know who she's running with? It's like this house was a honey-pot and the boys flies."

She turned to him now with her voice full of husk, and even in the dark her face bleached and shrunken from its plumpness.

"You oughtn't to let her! You--hadn't the right! She's too young and too--sweet for a man like him. You oughtn't to let her!"

He stepped out in front of her, taking her by the elbows and holding them close down against her sides.

"Why, Hattie, that child's own mother that loved her like an angel couldn't worry no more foolishly about her than you do. Gad! I think you wimmin love it! It was the same kind of worrying shortened her mother's life. Always about nothing, too. 'Lenie,' I used to say to her, just to quiet her, 'it was worry killed a Maltese cat; don't let it kill you.' That child is all right, Hattie. What if he does like her pretty well? Worse could happen."

"No, it couldn't! No!"

"Why not? He 'ain't seen her since a child, and all of a sudden he comes West and finds in front of him an eye-opener."

"He's twice her age--more!"

"The way girls demand things nowadays, a man has got to be twice her age before he can provide for her. Leon Kessler is big rich."

"He--he's fast."

"Show me the one that 'ain't sowed his wild oats. Them's the kind that settle down quickest into good husbands."

"He--"

"S-ay, it 'ain't happened yet. I'm the last one to wish my girl off my hands. I only say not a boy in this town could give it to her so good. Fifteen years I've done business with that firm, and with his father before him. A-1 house! S-ay, I should worry that he ain't a Sunday-school boy. Show me the one that is. Your old man in his young days wasn't such a low flier, neither, if anybody should ask you." He made a whirring noise in his throat at that, pinching her cold cheek. She was walking rapidly now toward the house. "Well, since our daughter goes out riding in a six-thousand-dollar car, to show that we're sports, lets her father and mother take themselves out for a ride in their six-hundred-dollar car. I drive you out as far as Yiddle's farm for some sweet butter, eh?"

"No, no; I'm cold. It's getting damp."

"S-ay, you can't hurt my feelings. On a cool night like this, a brand-new sleeping-porch ain't the worst spot in the world."

They were on the veranda, the hall light falling dimly out and over them.

"She's so young--"

"Now, now, Hattie; worry killed a Maltese cat. Come to bed."

"You go. I want to wait up."

"Hattie, you want to make of yourself the laughingstock of the neighborhood. A grown-up girl goes out riding with a man like Leon Kessler, and you wants to wait up and catch your death of cold. If we had more daughters, I wouldn't have no more wife; I'd have a shadow from worry. Come!"

"I'll be up in a minute, I.W."

He regarded her in some concern.

"Why, Hattie, if there's anything in the world to worry about, wouldn't I be the first? Ain't you well?"

"Yes."

"Then come. I'll get a pitcher of ice-water to take up-stairs."

"I'll be up in a minute."

"I don't want, Hattie, you should wait up for that child and take your death of cold. Because I sleep like a log when I once hit the bed, don't you play no tricks on me."

"I'll be up in a minute, I.W."

He moved into the house and, after a while, to the clinking of ice against glass, up the stairs.

"Come, Hattie; and be sure and leave the screen door unhooked for her."

"Yes, I.W."

An hour she sat in the shrouded darkness of the elbow of the veranda. Street noises died. The smell of damp came out. Occasionally a motor-car sped by, or a passer-by, each step clear on the asphalt. The song of crickets grated against the darkness. An infant in the right-side house

raised a fretful voice once or twice, and then broke into a sustained and coughy fit of crying. Lights flashed up in the windows, silhouettes moving across drawn shades. Then silence again. The university clock, a mile out, chimed twelve, and finally a sonorous one. Mrs. Goldstone lay huddled in her chair, vibrant for sound. At two o'clock the long, high-power car drew up at the curb again, this time without honking. She sat forward, trembling.

There followed a half-hour of voices at the curb, a low voice of undeniable tensity, high laughter that shot up in joyous geysers. It was a fifteen-minute process from the curb to the first of the porch steps, and then Mrs. Goldstone leaned forward, her voice straining to keep its pitch.

"Effie!"

The young figure sprang around the porch pillar.

"Mamma Hat! Honey, you didn't wait up for me?"

Mr. Kessler came forward, goggles pushed up above his cap-visor.

"Well, I'm hanged! What did you think--that I was kidnapping the kid?"

"How--how dared you! It's after two, and--"

Miss Goldstone began then to jump again upon her toes, linking her arm in his.

"Tell her, Leon! Tell her! Oh, Mamma Hat! Mamma Hat!"

She was suddenly in Mrs. Goldstone's arms, her ardent face burning through the white wrapper.

Mr. Kessler removed his cap, flinging it upward again and catching it.

"Tell her, Leon!"

"Well, what would you say, Becker, what would you say if I was to come out here and swipe that little darling there?"

"Oh, Leon--kidder!"

"If--what?"

"I said it!"

"Tell her, Kess; tell it out! Oh, mommie, mommie!"

He leaned forward with his hand on the back of the turbulent head of curls.

"You little darling, I'm going to put you on my back and carry you off to New York."

"Oh, mommie," cried Miss Goldstone, flinging back her head so that her face shone up, "he asked me in Delmar Garden! We're going to live in New York, darling, and Rockaway in summer. He don't care a rap about the New York girls compared to me. We're going to Cuba on our honeymoon. I'm engaged, darling! I got engaged to-night!"

"That's the idea, Twinkle-pinkle. I'd carry you off to-night if I could!"

"Mommie Hat, ain't you glad?"

"Effie--Effie--"

"Mommie, what is it? What's the matter, darling? What?"

"I--it's just that I got cold, honey, sitting here waiting--the surprise and all. Run, honey, and get me a drink. Crack some ice, dearie, and then run up-stairs in the third floor back and see if there's some brandy up there. Be sure to look for--the brandy. I--I'll be all right."

"My poor, darling, cold mommie!"

She was off on the slim, quick feet, the screen door slamming and vibrating.

Then Mrs. Goldstone sprang up.

"You wouldn't dare! Such a baby--you wouldn't dare!"

"Dare what?"

"You can't have the child! You can't!"

"What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?"

He advanced a step, his voice and expression lifted in incredulity.

"Say, look here, Becker, are you stark, raving crazy? Is it possible you don't know that, in your place, nobody but a crazy woman would open her mouth?"

"Maybe; but I don't care. Just leave her alone, Kess, please! That little baby can stand nothing but happiness."

"Why, woman, you're crazy with the heat. If you want to know it, I'm nuts over that little kid. Gad! never ran across anything so full of zip in my life! I'm going to make life one joy ride after another for that joy baby. That kid's the showpiece of the world. She's got me so hipped I'm crazy, and the worst of it is I like it. You don't need to worry. As the boys say, when I settle down, I'm going to settle hard."

"You ain't fit to have her!"

"Say, the kind of life I've lived I ain't ashamed to tell her own father. He's a man, and I'm a man, and life's life."

"You--"

"Now look here, Becker. That'll be about all. If you're in your right senses, you're going to ring the joy bells louder than any one around here. What you got on your chest you can just as well cut your throat as tell; so we'll both live happy ever after. There's not one thing in my life that any jury wouldn't pass, and--"

"I've seen you drunk."

"Well, what of it? It took three of us to yank old I.W. out from under the table at my sister's wedding."

"You--What about you and Cissie and--"

The light run of feet, and almost instantly Miss Goldstone was pirouetting in between them.

"Here, dearie! There wasn't anything like brandy up in the third floor. I found some cordial in the pantry. Drink it down, dearie; it'll warm you."

They hovered together, Miss Goldstone trembling between solicitude and her state of intensity.

"Kessie darling, you've got to go now. I want to get mommie up-stairs to bed. You got to go, darling, until to-morrow. Oh, why isn't it tomorrow? I want everybody to know. Don't let on, Mamma Hat. I'll pop it on popsie at breakfast while I'm opening his eggs for him. You come for breakfast, Leon. You're in the family now." He lifted her bodily from her feet, pressing a necklace of kisses round her throat.

"Good night, Twinkle-pinkle, till to-morrow."

"Good night, darling. I won't sleep a wink, waiting for you."

"Me, neither."

"One more, darling--a French one."

"Two for good measure."

"Sleep tight, beautiful! Good night!"

"Good night, beautifulest!"

She stood poised forward on the topmost step, watching him between backward waves of the hand crank, throw his clutch, and steer off. Then she turned inward, a sigh trembling between her lips.

"Oh, Mamma Hat, I--"

But Mrs. Goldstone's chair was empty. Into it with a second and more tremulous sigh sank Miss Goldstone, her lips lifted in the smile that had been kissed.

When Mr. Goldstone slept, every alternate breath started with a rumble somewhere down in the depths of him and, drawn up like a chain from a well, petered out into a thin whistle before the next descent. Beside him, now, on her knees, Mrs. Goldstone shook at his shoulder.

"I.W.! I.W.! Quick! Wake up!"

He let out a shuddering, abysmal breath.

"I.W.! Please!"

He moaned, turning his face from her.

She tugged him around again, now raising his face between her hands from the pillow.

"I.W.! Try to wake up! For God's sake, I.W.!" He sprang up in a terrified daze, sitting upright in bed.

"My God! Who? What's wrong? Effie! Hattie."

"No, no; don't get excited, I.W. It's me--Hattie!"

"What?"

"Nothing, I.W. Nothing to get excited about. Only I got to tell you something."

"Where's Effie?"

"She's home."

"What time is it?"

"Three."

"Come back to bed, then; you got the nightmare."

"No, no!"

"You ain't well, Hattie? Let me light up."

"No, no; only, I got to tell you something! I 'ain't been to bed; I been waiting up, and--"

"And what?"

"She just came home--engaged!"

"My God! Effie?"

He blinked in the darkness, drawing up his knees to a hump under the sheet.

"Engaged--how?"

"I.W., don't you remember? Wake up, honey. To Kess, to Leon Kessler that she went automobiling with."

"Our Effie engaged--to Leon Kessler?"

"Yes, I.W.--our little Effie!"

A smile spread over his face slowly, and he clasped his hands in an embrace about his knees.

"You don't tell me!"

"Oh, I.W., please--"

"Our little girl. S-ay, how poor Lenie would have loved this happiness! Our little girl engaged to get married!"

"I.W., she--"

"We do the right thing by them--eh, Hattie? Furnish them up as many

rooms as they want. But, s-ay, they don't need help from us. He's a lucky boy who gets her, I don't care who he is. Her papa's little Effie, a baby--old enough to get engaged!"

"I.W., she's too--young. Don't give him our little Effie; she's too young!"

"I married her mother, Hattie, when she wasn't yet eighteen."

"I know, I.W., but not to Leon Kessler. She's such a baby, I.W. He--didn't I work for him nine years, I.W.--don't I know what he is!"

"I'm surprised, Hattie, you should hold so against a man his wild oats."

"Then why ain't oats for the man oats for the woman? It's the men that sow the wild oats and the women--us women that's got to reap them!"

"S-ay, life is life. Do you want to put your head up against a brick wall?"

"A wall that men built!"

"It's always hard, Hattie, for good women like you and like poor Lenie was to understand. It's better you don't. You shouldn't even think about it."

"But, I.W.--"

"If I didn't know Leon Kessler was no worse than ninety-nine good husbands in a hundred, you think I would let him lay a finger on the apple of my eye? I don't understand, Hattie; all of a sudden this evening, you're so worked up. Instead of happiness, you come like with a funeral. Is that why you wake me up out of a sleep? To cry about it? Don't think, Hattie, that just as much as you I haven't got the good of my child at heart. Out of a sound sleep she wakes me to cry because a happiness has come to us. Leon Kessler can have any girl in this town he wants. Maybe he wasn't a Sunday-school boy in his day--but say, show me one that was."

She drew herself up, grasping him at the shoulders.

"I.W., don't let him have our little Effie!"

"Nonsense!" he said, in some distaste for her voice choked with tears. "Cut out this woman foolishness now and come to bed. Is this something new you're springing on me? I got no patience with women who indulge themselves with nervous breakdowns. I never thought, Hattie, you had nothing like that in you."

Her voice was rising now in hysteria, slipping up frequently beyond her control.

"If you do, I can't stand it! I can't stand it, I.W.!"

He peered at her in the starlight that came down through the screened-in top of the sleeping-porch.

"Why?" he said, suddenly awake, and shortly.

"I worked for him nine years, I.W. I--I know him."

"How?"

"I know him, I.W. She's too good for him."

"How do you know him?"

"I--the girls, I.W. One little girl now, Cissie--I--I hear it all from my friend Delehanty--sometimes she--she writes to me. I--the models and--the girls and--and the lady buyers--they--they used to gossip in the factory and--I--I used to hear about it. I.W., don't! Let go! You hurt!" His teeth and his hands were very tight, and he hung now over the side of the bed and toward her.

"He--I.W.--he--"

"He what? He what?"

"He--ain't good enough."

"I say he is!"

"But he--I.W.--she--she's such a baby and he--he--. You hurt!"

"Then tell me, he what?"

"I.W., you're hurting me!"

"He what--do you hear?--he what?"

"Don't make me say it! Don't! It--it just happened--with him meaning one thing all the time and--me another. I was thrown with that kind of a crowd, I.W., all my life. All the girls, they--It don't make me worse than it makes him. With me it was once; with him it's--it's--I didn't know, I.W. My mother she died that year before, and--I needed the job, and I swear to God, I.W., I--kept hoping even if he never put it in words he'd fix it. Kill me, if you want to, I.W., but don't throw our Effie to him! Don't! Don't! Don't!"

She was pounding the floor with her bare palms, her face so distorted that the mouth drawn tight over the teeth was as wide and empty as a mask's, and sobs caught and hiccoughed in her throat.

"I didn't know, I.W.! Don't kill me for what I didn't know!"

She crouched back from his knotted face, and he sprang then out of bed, nightshirt flapping about his knees, and his fists and his bulging eyes raised to the quiet stars.

"God," he cried, "help me to keep hold of myself! Help me! You--you--"

His voice was so high and so tight in his throat that it stuck, leaving him in inarticulate invocation.

"I.W.!"

"My child engaged to--to her mother's--you--you--"

"I.W.! Do you see now? You wouldn't let him have her! You wouldn't, I.W.! Tell me you wouldn't!"

"I want him if he touches her to be struck dead! I want him to be struck dead!"

"Thank God!" said Mrs. Goldstone, weeping now tears that eased her breathing.

Suddenly he leaned toward her, his voice rather quieter, but his forefinger waggling out toward the open door.

"You go!" he said, and then in a gathering hurricane of fury, "go!"

"I.W., don't yell! Don't! Don't!"

"Go--while I'm quiet. Go--you hear?"

She edged around him where he stood, in fear of his white, crouched attitude.

"I.W.!"

He made a step toward her, and, at the sound in his throat, she ran out into the hallway and down the stairs to the porch. In the deep shade of the veranda's elbow a small figure lay deep in sleep in the wicker rocker, one bare arm up over her head and lips parted.

In a straight chair beside her Mrs. Goldstone sat down. She was

shuddering with chill and repeating to herself, quite aloud and over and over again:

"What have I done? What have I done? What have I done?"

She was suddenly silent then, staring out ahead, her hands clutching the chair-arms.

To her inflamed fancy, it was as if, beyond the hedge, the old disused hitching-post had become incarnate and, in the form of her naive and horned conception, was coming toward her with the whites of his eyes bloodshot.

SLAVES OF THE DUST
by Sophie Wenzel Ellis
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Astounding Stories of Super-Science, December 1930*, by Various

Fate's retribution was adequate. There emerged a rat with a man's head and face.

It's a poor science that would hide from us the great, deep, sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all science swims as mere superficial film.

--_Carlyle_.

The two _batalões_ turned from the open waters of the lower Tapajos River into the _igarapé_, the lily-smothered shallows that often mark an Indian settlement in the jungles of Brazil. One of the two half-breed rubber-gatherers suddenly stopped his _batalõe_ by thrusting a paddle against a giant clump of lilies. In a corruption of the Tupi dialect, he called over to the white man occupying the other frail craft.

"We dare go no farther, master. The country of the Ungapuks is bewitched. It is too dangerous."

Fearfully he stared over his shoulder toward a spot in the slimy water where a dim bulk moved, which was only an alligator hunting for his breakfast.

Hale Oakham, as long and lanky and level-eyed as Charles Lindbergh, ran despairing fingers through his damp hair and groaned.

"But how can I find this jungle village without a guide?"

The _caboclo_ shrugged. "The village will find you. It is bewitched, master. But you will soon see the path through the _matto_."

"Can't you stay by me until time to land? I don't like the looks of these alligators."

"It is better for a white man to face an alligator than for a _caboclo_ to face an Ungapuk. Once they used to kill and eat us for our strength. Now--" Again his shrug was eloquent.

"Now?" Hale prompted impatiently.

"The white god who put a spell on these one-time cannibals will bewitch us and make us wash and rejoice when it is time to die."

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He shuddered and spat at a cayman that was lumbering away from his _batalõe._

Hale Oakham laughed, a hearty boyish laugh for a rather learned young professor.

"Is that all they do to you?" he asked.

"No. All who enter this magic _matto_ die soon, rejoicing. Before the last breath comes, it is said their bodies turn into a handful of silver dust--poof!--like that." He snapped his dirty fingers. "Then the life that leaves them goes into rocks that walk."

Hale sighed resignedly. There wasn't any use to argue.

"Unload your _batalõe_," he ordered testily, "and get your filthy carcasses away."

The half-breeds obeyed readily. As the departing _batalõe_ turned from the _igarapé_ into the open water of the river, the young man repressed a sudden lifting of his scalp. He was in for it now!

His long body sprawled out in the _batalõe_, he paddled about aimlessly for several minutes until he found an aisle through the jungle--the path that led to the jungle village which he was visiting in the name of science, and for a certain award.

Before plunging into that waiting tangle where life and death carried on a visible, unceasing struggle, he hesitated. Instinctively he shrank from losing himself in that mad green world.

* * * * *

He had first heard of the Ungapuks at the convention of the Nescience Club in New York, that body of scientists, near-scientists and adventurers linked together for the purpose of awarding the yearly Woolman prizes for the most spectacular addition of empiric facts to various branches of science. One of the members of the club, an explorer, had told a wild yarn about a tribe of Brazilian Indians, headed by Sir Basil Addington, an English scientist, who was conducting secret experiments in biochemistry in his jungle laboratory. The explorer had said that the scientist, half-crazed by a powerful narcotic, had seemingly discovered some secret of life which enabled him to produce monsters in his laboratory and to change the physical characteristics of the Ungapuk Indians, who, in five years, had been transformed from cannibals into cultured men and women.

And now Hale Oakham, hoping to win one of the Woolman prizes, was here in the country of the Ungapuks, entering the jungle path that lead to the unknown.

Fifty feet from the _igarapé_, the path curved sharply away from a giant tree. Hale approached the bend with his hand on his gun. Just before he reached it, he stopped suddenly to listen.

A woman's voice had suddenly broken forth in a wild, incredibly sweet song. Hale stood entranced, drinking in the heady sounds that stirred his emotions like _masata_, the jungle intoxicant. The singer approached the bend in the path, while the young man waited eagerly.

The first sight of her made him gasp. He had expected to see an Indian girl. No sane traveler would imagine a white woman in the Amazon jungle, with skin as amazingly pale as the great, fleshy victoria regia lilies in the _igarapé_.

When she saw Hale, she stopped instantly. With a quick, practiced twist, she reached for the bow flung across her shoulders and fitted a barbed arrow to the string.

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She was a beautiful barbarian, standing quivering before him. In the thick dull gold braids hanging over her bare shoulders flamed two enormous scarlet flowers, no redder than her own lips pouted in alarm. There was a savage brevity to her clothing, which consisted only of a short skirt of rough native grass and breastplates of beaten gold, held in place by strings of colored seeds.

The girl held out an imperious hand and, in perfect English, said:

"Go back!"

Hale drew his long body up to its slim height, folded his arms, and gave her his most winning smile. His insolence added to his wholesome good looks.

"Why?" he exclaimed. "I've come a couple of thousand miles to call on you."

He saw that the eyes which held his levelly were pure and limpid, and of an astonishing orchid-blue.

"Who are you?" Her throaty, vibrant voice was a thing of the flesh, whipping Hale's senses to sudden madness.

"I'm Hale Oakham," he said, a little tremulously, "a lone, would-be scientist knocking about the jungle. Won't you tell me your name?"

She nodded gravely. "I am Aña. I, too, am white." Her rich voice was quietly proud. "Come; I'll see if Aimu will receive you."

With surprising, childlike trust, she held out her little hand to him. The gesture was so delightfully natural that Hale, grinning boyishly, took her hand and held it as they walked down the jungle path.

"Sing for me," he demanded abruptly. "Sing the song you sang just now."

"That?" asked the girl, turning the virgin-blue fire of her eyes on him. "That was my death-song that I practice each day. Perhaps soon I shall be released from this." She passed her hands over her beautiful, half-clothed body.

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Hale's warm glance swept over her. "Do you want to die?"

"Yes; don't you? But you do not, or you would not have retreated from my poisoned arrow."

"No, Aña; I want to live."

"To live--and be a slave of _this_?" Again her hand went over her slim body. "A slave of a pile of flesh that you must feed and protect from the agonies that attack it on every side? Bah! But I am hoping that my turn will come next."

"Your turn for what, Aña?"

"To enter the Room of Release. Perhaps, if Aimu approves of you, you,

too, may taste of death." Her gentle smile was beatific.

"Do you speak of Sir Basil Addington?"

"He was called that once, before he came to us. Now he has no name. We can find none holy enough for him; and so we call him Aimu, which means good friend." Her beautiful face was sweet with reverence.

And now, in the distance, Hale saw that the path led into a large clearing. He slowed his pace, for he wanted to know this lovely girl better before he joined the Ungapuks.

"Who are you, Aña?" he asked suddenly, bending closer to the crinkled, dull-gold hair.

"I am Aña, a white woman." She looked at him frankly.

"But who are your parents, and how did you get among the Ungapuks?"

Aña's red lips curved into a dewy smile. "I thought all white men were wise, like Aimu. But you are stupid. How do you think a white woman could appear in a tribe of Indians who live in the jungle, many weeks' journey from what you call civilization?"

Hale looked a little blank and more than a little disconcerted.

"I suppose I am stupid," he said dryly. "But tell me, Aña, how did you get here?"

"Why," she exclaimed, "he made me!"

"Made you? Good Lord! What do you mean?"

"Just what I said, Hale Oakham. If he can take a few grains of dust and make a shoot that will grow into a giant tree like yonder monster itauba, don't you think he can create a small white girl like me?" Her orchid-blue eyes glowed innocently into his.

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The eager questions that he would have asked froze upon his lips, for a party of Indians approached.

The six nearly naked red men came close and surveyed him, toying nervously with their primitive, feather-decorated weapons.

A tall, handsome young fellow who possessed something of the picturesque perfection of the North American plains' Indian stepped forward and, in perfect English, said:

"Good morning, white stranger. What is it you wish of the Ungapuks?"

"I came to see your white _cacique_," said Hale.

"Aimu? What is it you wish of Aimu? He is ours, white stranger."

"Yes, he is yours. I come as a friend, perhaps to help him in his great work."

"Perhaps!" The young Indian folded his bronze, muscular arms over his broad chest and continued his cool survey of Hale. "White men before you have come: spies and thieves. Some we poisoned with curari. Others Aimu took into the Room of Release."

He turned to Aña, who was still standing by Hale, and his expression softened.

"What shall we do with him, Aña?" he asked the question, a fleeting look of hunger swept his fine, flashing eyes.

Aña flushed beautifully, and, moving closer to Hale, with an impulsive, almost childish gesture, slipped her arm through his.

"Let us take him to our village, Unani Assu!" she suggested. "I like him."

It was Hale's turn to flush, which he did like a schoolboy.

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Unani Assu's brows drew together in a scowl. The hand holding his blow-pipe jerked convulsively.

"Aña! Come away!" he growled. "You mustn't touch a stranger!"

Aña's blue eyes stretched with astonishment. "But I like to touch him, Unani Assu!"

The tall Indian, with a half comical gesture of despair, said:

"Don't misunderstand her, stranger. She is young, very young, ah! And she has known only the reborn men of the Ungapuks."

He stepped firmly over to Aña, and, taking the girl by the arm, drew her away.

"Run ahead," he commanded, "and tell Aimu that we come."

Aña, her feathered bamboo anklets clicking together, sped away.

Unani Assu bowed courteously to Hale.

"Come, stranger. If you are an enemy, it is you who must fear." He motioned for him to proceed down the jungle path.

The path ended at a clearing studded with _moloccas_, the Indian grass huts made of plaited straw. Altogether the scene was peaceful and sane and far removed from the strange tales that Hale had heard concerning the Ungapuks.

Hale was conducted to a long, low stone building, where, in the doorway, stood a tall and emaciated white man.

"Aimu!" said the Indians reverently, and bowed themselves.

Over the bare, brown backs, the white man looked at Hale.

"Sir Basil Addington?" asked the young man.

"Yes. You are welcome. Come in."

Hale entered the building.

* * * * *

He was in a book-filled study, furnished with hand-made chairs and a desk. Sir Basil asked him to be seated. He offered the young man long, brown native cigarettes and a very good drink made from yucca.

After several minutes of conversation, Sir Basil suddenly changed his manner.

"And now," he shot out, eyeing the young man through narrowed lids, "will you please state the purpose of this visit?"

Hale looked squarely at his questioner. "Frankly, Sir Basil, I have called on you because I am so intensely interested in your work among the Ungapuks that I wish to offer my services."

He gave in detail his family history, his education, and his experience as a teacher and a scientist.

Sir Basil tapped his teeth thoughtfully with a pencil.

"But why do you think you can be of assistance to me?"

"That, of course, is for you to decide."

Hale thought that the scientist looked like a huge, starved crow in his loose-fitting coat. He was so fleshless that, when the light fell strongly on his face as it now did, the bones of his head and hands showed through the skin with horrible clearness.

Hale, under Sir Basil's scrutiny, decided instantly that he did not like him.

"I need a helper," the scientist went on, with the air of talking to himself. "A white assistant who neither loves nor fears me. Unani Assu is good enough in his way, but I need a helper who has had technical training." Suddenly he wheeled on Hale and asked sharply, "How are your nerves, young man?"

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Hale started, but managed to answer calmly. "Excellent. My war record isn't half bad, and that was surely backed with good nerves."

"And you say you have no close relatives, no ties of any sort to interfere with work that is dangerous--and something else?"

"Not a soul would care if I passed out to-day, Sir Basil."

"Good! And now tell me this: are you one of those scientists whose minds are so mechanical, so mathematically made, as it were, that your entire outlook on science is based on old, established beliefs, or do you belong to that rare but modern type of trained thinker and dreamer who refuse to permit yesterday's convictions to influence to-day's visions?"

Hale smiled quietly. "I recently lost my chair in a famous university because of my so-called unscientific teachings regarding ether-drift."

Expressing himself in purely scientific terms, he went into an elaboration of his revolutionary theory. When he had finished, Sir Basil reached out his clawlike hand to him.

"Good!" he approved. "You have dared to think originally. Now listen to my theory of mind-electrons which has grown into the established fact that I have discovered the secret of life and death."

The long, thin hands reached into a pocket for a box of pills. He swallowed one greedily, and immediately his emaciated face seemed charged with new virility.

He spoke out suddenly. "Our world, you know, is made up of three powers: matter, energy and what you call life. I might really say that there are

but two powers, for matter, in its last analysis, is a form of energy. And what is life? You can't call it a form of energy, for every inorganic atom has energy without having life. Life, Mr. Oakham, is mind or consciousness."

He began pacing the floor restlessly. "Everything that lives has this consciousness, and I say this in defiance of some fixed scientific views. The amoeba in a stagnant pool, a thallophyte on a bit of old bread, any of the myriads of trees and plants that you see in the jungle all have consciousness as well as you. And why?"

* * * * *

He brought his fist down upon the table. "Because they issue from the same source as you and I, the almighty mind, eternal, indestructible, which has permitted itself to be enslaved by matter. You are Hale Oakham. I am Basil Addington, yet we are one and the same. Let me illustrate."

He seized a glass and poured it full of _masata_. "Look! Two portions of _masata_. But I pour what is in the glass back into the bottle. The molecules cohere and the two portions become one again. Some day you and I--our individual consciousnesses--will flow back to the Whole. That sounds mystical, but listen.

"We scientists hold that the electron explains nearly all the physical and chemical phenomena. I go further and say that it explains _all_. Matter, electricity, light, heat, magnetism--all can be reduced to the ultimate unit. So, Mr. Oakham, I am going to make clear to you how life itself is electronic."

His long finger touched Hale's arm. "You, I, yonder mosquito on your sleeve, even one of the germs that is causing my malaria, all being individual living things, are the ultimate units of what I shall personify as the Mind. When I say _you_ I do not speak of that mound of flesh in which you exist, and which can be reduced to the same familiar basic elements and compounds as make up inorganic structures; I speak of your mind, your consciousness--for that is the real you. Are you following me?"

"Perfectly, Sir Basil." Hale reached for another drink. "But do you mean to say that you and I are no more than a mosquito, a malaria protozoan, or even one of those trees in the jungle?"

Sir Basil's dry skin slipped back into a long smile. "Startling, isn't it? You, I, and all other living organisms are nothing but matter, energy and consciousness. You and I have a larger share of consciousness, because our organic structure permits the mind-electrons greater freedom over the matter than composes our bodies. We are more

acutely aware of the universe about us, have a greater facility for enjoyment and suffering, a more intricate brain and nervous system. Yet when our bodies die and our consciousness is released, the mind-electrons enslaved by our atoms go back to the elemental Whole. This holds good for the protozoan, the tree, the man--for all things that live."

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Hale was drinking again. "You mean, Sir Basil, that there is a sort of war waged against what you personify as the Mind by matter; that matter is constantly seeking to enslave mind-electrons, so that it may become an organism which, for awhile, may enjoy what we call life?"

Sir Basil pushed back his tufted hair and looked happy. "Yes! And it's Nature's supreme blunder! In the end, the Mind always conquers and gains its release, yet the eternal chain of enslavement goes on and on, and will continue to go on as long as there is a living organism in the world to bind mind to matter."

Hale was excited now, as much from the fiery intoxicant as from the scientist's weird revelation. "I get you," he said, rather inelegantly for a professor. "You mean that if every living thing in the world should pass out, every man, every plant, every animal, even down to microscopic infusoria, the Mind would collect all its electrons, and through some more jealous law of, er, cohesion hold these electrons inviolate from matter and energy?"

"Right! And again, as in the beginning, the Mind would rule supreme. By what I have proved, you and I and all other creatures that now have life may, as separate unfleshed electrons, enjoy eternal consciousness as a part of the Mind." A new passion leaped to his dark eyes. "When I have finished my mission, no more need we be slaves of the dust, subject to all the frightful sufferings of this dunghill of flesh."

He brought his fist down upon his skinny leg with a resounding blow.

"But you cannot reduce your theory to fact, Sir Basil!"

"No?" Again came that frightful grin to his cadaverous face. "Can you withstand shock?"

"If you mean shock to the eye, let me remind you that I served two years in the big fight."

"Then come to my laboratory. Better take another drink."

While Hale helped himself again from the _masata_ bottle, Sir Basil swallowed another pellet.

Then the two went into the adjoining apartment.

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Sir Basil, his hand over the doorknob, paused.

"Before we go in," he said, "I want you to remember that we call natural that which is characteristic of the physical world. Everything alive in this laboratory was produced by nature. I merely made available the materials, or, rather, I made the conditions under which matter was able to enslave mind-electrons."

He opened the door, slipped his body through, and, with his ugly, teeth-revealing grin, gestured for Hale to follow him.

Hale steeled himself and looked around half fearfully. The first glance took in a large and well-equipped laboratory, somewhat fetid with animal odors. The second lingered here and there on cages, aquariums, incubators, and other containers where creatures moved.

Suddenly, as something scuttled across the floor and disappeared into a hole in the wall, Hale cried out and covered his eyes with a hand.

Sir Basil laughed aloud. "Why didn't you examine it closer?"

Hale looked nauseated. "My God, Sir Basil! A rat with a man's head and face!"

Sir Basil's voice was sharp, decisive. "Before you leave this laboratory, you're going to come out of your foolish belief that man is a creature apart from other living organisms. You--the conscious you--is no greater, no more important in the final balance than the spark of consciousness in that rat. When your body and the rat's body give up their atoms to nature's laboratory, the little enslaved mind-electron that is you and the one that is the rat will be identical."

Again Hale shivered and turned away from that cold, too-thin face.

The scientist was speaking. "Step around to all those cages and pens. I want you to see all my slaves of the dust."

* * * * *

But long before Hale had encircled the room, he was so disturbed at what he saw that he could scarcely complete his frightful inspection. In every enclosure he viewed a monstrosity that in some way resembled a human. Every reptile, every insect, every queer, misshapen animal not only looked human in some shocking manner, but also seemed to possess

human characteristics. It seemed as though some demented creator with a perverted sense of humor had attempted to mock man by calling forth monsters in his image.

At last the young man cried out: "How did you breed these freaks?"

"They are not freaks, and I did not breed them. They are nature's parentless products whose basic elements were brought together in this laboratory, and, by a scientific reproduction of the functions of creation, endowed with the life principle, which is merely mind-electrons." He smoothed his long tuft of hair nervously. "Would you like to see how life springs from a wedding of matter, energy, and consciousness?"

"I suspect I can stand anything now," Hale admitted.

"Then come and peep into a very remarkable group of apparatus I have developed, where you can watch atoms building molecules and molecules building living organisms."

"You say I can see atoms?"

"Not directly, of course. The light waves will forever prevent us from actually seeing the atom. But I have perfected a system of photography which magnifies particles smaller than light waves, and, separating their images from the light waves, renders detail clear in the moving pictures."

* * * * *

He went to a huge machine or series of machines which took up all the center floor space of the laboratory, where he busied himself in an intricate network of wires, mirrors, electrodes, ray projectors, and traveling metal compartments. Presently he called out to Hale.

"Let me remind you, Oakham, that while any scientist can break up any of the various proteid molecules which are the basis of all living cells, animal and vegetable, no scientist before me has been able to compound the atoms and build them into a proteid molecule."

He bared his teeth in the smile that Hale hated.

"I am proud to tell you that the proteid molecule can be built up only when the third element of nature's trinity is added--the mind-electron. I have found a means of capturing the mind-electron and of bringing it in contact with proteid elements. And now it is possible to bring forth life in the laboratory. Come closer and watch proteid forming protoplasm, protoplasm forming a cell, and the cell evolving into--well, what do you want, an animal, plant, or an insect?"

Hale had fallen under the scientist's spell. He did not feel foolish when he said:

"Let's have a rat!"

* * * * *

Hale became so absorbed in the wonders of the laboratory that when lunch time came, Sir Basil had food brought to them. While they were eating a very good vegetable stew, farina, and luscious tropical fruits, a sudden, agonized scream rang out, followed by other screams and wails.

Sir Basil opened the door and looked out. Aña came running forward. Her blue eyes were flooded with tears.

"Oh, Aimu!" she moaned. "A tree fell on Unani Assu."

She buried her beautiful face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

Sir Basil frowned heavily.

"I can't lose Unani Assu yet," he declared. "He is a wonderful help around the laboratory. Is he dead?"

"No. We should rejoice if his time of release had come. But his legs, Aimu! No one wants to suffer and be crippled."

Even in her distress, the girl's voice was rich and vibrant, and every tone moved Hale curiously.

"Hurry!" cried the scientist. "Have them bring him here before he dies."

The girl leaped to her feet and sped away.

"Come, Oakham," continued Sir Basil. "Here is a rare opportunity for you to see how completely I have mastered the laws that govern organic matter. Help me prepare."

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For several minutes, Hale worked under the scientist's sharply spoken directions. By the time the injured man was brought to the laboratory, Sir Basil was ready for him.

Unani Assu was still conscious, but his pale face indicated that he had lost much blood. When the improvised stretcher was lowered to the floor, Sir Basil sent all the Indians away.

Unani Assu opened his eyes and called feebly, "Aña!"

"Be still!" ordered Sir Basil. "Aña is not here."

"Please!" gasped the dying man. "I want her--my Aña!"

Sir Basil sucked in his breath sharply. "What's this? Have you been making love to Aña again, after my warning to you?"

The sufferer stirred uneasily. "No!" he panted. "But perhaps my hour of release has come, and I want to look at her--once more."

The scientist smiled unpleasantly as he eyed the magnificent body which looked like a broken statue in bronze.

"Some human characteristics are strange," he muttered. "In spite of everything I do, this fellow continues to love Aña: Aña whom I intend for myself."

He stepped to the apparatus and swiftly changed one of the adjustments.

"Perhaps," he resumed, with a gleam in his eyes that chilled Hale, "this will forever cure him."

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In another moment, the still, half-dead body was lifted and gently slipped into a compartment.

Before Hale's horrified gaze fastened on the eye-piece which revealed moving pictures of every process that went on within, Unani Assu's body was reduced almost instantly to a fine, silvery dust.

"Good God!" he cried. "You have killed him."

The scientist's teeth showed in his wide smile. "Think so? Does a woman destroy a dress when she rips it up to make it over?"

"Do you mean me to understand that you can reduce a living body to its basic elements and then rebuild these elements into a remade man?"

"Watch!" warned the scientist.

Hale looked again and saw the silver dust that was once a living body being whirled into a tiny, grublike thing. He saw the grub expand into an embryo, and the embryo develop into a foetus. From now on the development was slower, and he often stopped to talk with Sir Basil.

Once he asked: "If this man had died naturally, could you have brought him back to life?"

Sir Basil shook his head. "No. When once the mind-electron is completely freed from its enslavement by matter, it is forever beyond recall by the body it has just vacated. Like atomic electrons, whose equilibrium disturbed break away from their planetary system and go dashing off into space, only to be drawn into another planetary system, the mind-electron may be enslaved almost immediately by extraneous matter. Had Unani Assu died, his liberated mind-electron might at once have been captured by a jungle flower going to seed. Immediately a new seed would be started. And now the former Unani Assu would be a seed of a jungle flower, later to find new life as a plant."

Suddenly the scientist threw up his hand and cried: "You see? The Mind will be eternally enslaved as long as there is life! Oh, for the time of deliverance!" He gazed fanatically into space, as though he dreamed magnificently.

Hale observed him thoughtfully. When that great brain weakened, the consequences would be frightful.

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Sir Basil, as though he had made a sudden decision, went over to that part of his machine which he called the molecule-disintegrator.

"Oakham!" he called out. "I have taken you partly into my confidence. Now I want to show you something. Come here."

Hale obeyed with misgivings. The scientist pointed out the window to a group of Indians, anxious relatives of Unani Assu.

"Watch!" he ordered.

Turning one of the projectors on the machine toward the window, he sighted carefully and pressed a button.

Immediately one of the Indians fell to the ground and struggled. His companions began dancing around him in evident joy. Faintly to the laboratory came a familiar chant, which Hale recognized as Aña's death song.

Dust to dust
Mind to Mind--
He will shed his body
As the green snake sheds his skin.

As Hale watched, the struggling Indian's body seemed to shrink, and

then, instantly, it disappeared.

"Watch them scatter the dust!" said the scientist.

One of the Indians stooped and blew upon the grass.

"What have you done!" Hale gasped. "You've killed this one. Oh, I see now! These poor devils are totally ignorant that you are killing them for practice. They worship you while you turn them to--silver dust!" He turned angrily on the scientist as though he longed to strike him.

"Keep cool, young man!" Sir Basil held up his fleshless hand. "There is no death! Change, yes; but no permanent blotting out of consciousness. Can't you see the horror of it as nature works? When your time for release comes, as it inevitably will, your mind-electron might find new enslavement in a worm!"

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Hale's reply came hotly. "If that is true, why do you murder these poor devils deliberately!"

"My dear Oakham, perhaps you are not so brilliant as I had hoped! All that I have done thus far is only child's play, in preparation for my real work. Haven't you guessed by now what I am getting ready to do?"

"No; I'm a poor guesser."

The scientist made a gesture of mock despair. "Then let me tell you. The molecule-disintegrator is active only on organic structures. When I concentrate it so"--he reached out again, sighted the projector on some point beyond the window and pressed a button--"one single living organism passes out. See that jupati tree by the rock disappear?"

Before Hale's eyes, the tall, slender tree melted into air.

"But," continued Sir Basil, "if I should _broadcast_ my molecule-disintegrator on electron magnetic waves, destruction would pass out in all directions, following the curve of the earth's surface, penetrating earth, air, water." He wet his lips carefully. "You understand?"

Hale stiffened suddenly. "I understand. No life could survive these vibrations of destruction? Through every corner of the earth where life lurks, they would reach?"

"Yes!" cried Sir Basil. "There would be not a blade of grass, not a living spore, not a hidden egg! Think of it, Oakham! No more would the clean air and the sweet earth reek with life, and at last the ultimate

mind-electron would be released forever."

He was breathing fast, and his emaciated face burned with two red spots.

Hale thought rapidly. He was convinced now that the fate of all life lay within that diabolical network of chemical apparatus.

At last he said: "And what of you and I, Sir Basil? Shall we, too, be caught in this wholesale destruction?"

"Not immediately," replied the scientist. "Of course, I want to remain in the flesh long enough to be sure that my purpose has been accomplished. I have provided a way for my own safety. If you desire, you may remain with me." He smiled craftily. "I have planned to keep Aña also, the woman whom I called into life and made as I wished."

* * * * *

His words pounded against Hale's tortured ears with almost physical force. With a supreme effort, the young man controlled his rage and despair. Aña needed him too much now for him to risk defeat by showing his emotions.

To Sir Basil he said: "But if all life disappears from the earth, what shall we do for food--you, Aña, and I?"

Sir Basil lifted his brows. "You don't think I overlooked that, do you? What is food? Various combinations of the basic elements. I who have conquered the atom need never worry about starving to death."

All this time, the machinery had been humming, and now the humming changed its note to a shrill whistle. Sir Basil went to the eye-piece and looked into it. Opening a door in the machinery, he disappeared inside. He came out soon, flushed and evidently elated.

"Bring the stretcher, Oakham," he ordered.

Hale brought the stretcher, placing it close to the machine. Then Sir Basil opened a metal door and gently eased out a human body.

It was Unani Assu, unconscious but alive and breathing. Hale, helping the scientist to get the man on the stretcher, noticed that the crushed legs were perfectly healed. Together they bore him to a long seat. The Indian's eyes were still closed, but his even breathing indicated that he was only sleeping.

Suddenly Hale pointed a finger and cried out. "My God, Sir Basil, look at his hands and feet!"

* * * * *

Unani Assu, still lying like a recumbent bronze statue sculptured by a master, was perfect from shoulder to wrist, from thigh to ankle. But, somewhere in that diabolical machine through which he had passed, his hands and feet had undergone a hideous metamorphism which had transformed them from the well-formed extremities of a splendid young Indian into the hairy paws of a giant rat!

Hale turned away his head, sick with disgust.

Sir Basil cut the silence triumphantly:

"Now he'll never again face Aña with love in his eyes!"

"What!" broke in Hale. "Did you plan this monstrous thing?"

"Of course! I told you I should forever cure him of his mad infatuation."

"But why didn't you kill him, as you killed the others? It would have been the most merciful way."

Sir Basil showed his teeth in his ugly smile. "A creator is never merciful."

A quiver passed through the Indian's body and presently, he sighed deeply and opened his eyes. He seemed dazed, puzzled. He looked from Hale to the scientist, and turned seeking eyes to other parts of the laboratory.

"Aña!" he called weakly. "Where is Aña?"

He pulled himself a little unsteadily to his feet--to the spatulated, hairy _rodent_ feet that had come out of the life-machine. Staggering, he would have fallen, had he not thrown out his arm to steady himself. Instinctively he tried to grasp something for support, and then, for the first time, he discovered his deformity.

* * * * *

Hale was never to forget that expression of horror and disgust that swept over the Indian's face as he spread open his revolting extremities and stared at them.

A sudden, wild roar of despair rang through the room. "Aimu! My hands!"

The scientist smiled with evident amusement. "You are a grotesque sight,

Unani Assu. Do you want to see Aña now?"

The fright and horror faded from the Indian's face, for now he glared with hate into the mad, mocking eyes.

"You did it!" the Indian ground out. "You've made me into a thing from which Aña will run screaming."

Through the quiet rage of the perfectly spoken English ran a thread of sorrow. "Aimu, whom we considered too holy to name!"

Choking, he hobbled away to the door, which he unbolted. As he passed out into the open, Sir Basil went over to the machine and began sighting the projector which cast forth the ray of destruction.

"No!" cried Hale. "You've done enough murder for to-day."

The scientist paused. "I was trying to be merciful. And then, I wonder if it is safe to let him go, hating me? Oh, well!" He shrugged his narrow shoulders. "I seldom leave the laboratory, and certainly nothing can harm me here." He touched the death-projector significantly.

Hale made a mental decision. "I must find out how the damned thing works and put it out of commission."

* * * * *

With this determination uppermost in his mind, he assumed a more intense interest in the strange laboratory. For the next two days, he assisted Sir Basil so assiduously that he learned much about the operation of the life-machine. And gradually he stopped being horrified as the fascination of producing life in the laboratory grew upon him.

After he had assisted the scientist in building living organisms from basic elements, he ceased to cringe when he remembered that perhaps it was true that Aña was created in the mysterious life-machine.

Once the scientist declared, "She is untainted with inheritance. She is the perfect mate that I called into life so that before I pass from the flesh I may taste that one human emotion I've never experienced--love."

That very night Hale kept a secret tryst with Aña after the village slept. Sweet, virginal Aña, who knew less of the world than a civilized child of twelve--what a sensation she would create in New York with her beauty, her culture, her natural fascination! With her in his arms and an orange tropical moon hanging low in the hot, black sky, he ceased to care that she had no ancestors, for now his one passionate desire was to save her from Sir Basil and to hold her forever for himself.

He might have been content to go on like this for months, tampering with creation in the day time, courting Aña in secret at night, had not Unani Assu come back for revenge.

* * * * *

On the fourth night after Unani Assu had disappeared into the jungle, Hale went to the _igarapé_ to meet Aña. He had gone only half the distance when he encountered her, running frantically up the path toward him.

"Hale!" she gasped, falling into his opened arms, where she lay panting and exhausted.

Hale gently patted the long braids, shimmering in silver tangles under the moonlight, and, crushing the soft little trembling body close, he murmured:

"What's the matter, darling?"

She dug her face deeper into the bend of his arm. "Oh, Hale! I saw Unani Assu a few minutes ago." For several moments she was unable to go on, for sudden sobs cut off her breath. "It's terrible, Hale, what Aimu did to his hands and feet, but what Unani's going to do to Aimu is still more terrible."

Hale placed his hand gently under her chin and tilted up her small, pale, tear-drenched face.

"Be calm, Aña, and tell me plainly."

Still clinging to him, she went on. "He told me that Aimu is a devil, Hale. He showed me his hands and asked me if I could ever get used to them and be--his squaw." The round gold breastplates and the necklace of painted seeds clinked together over her panting bosom. "I told him about you, Hale. And then he seemed to go mad. He said he'd kill Aimu to-night."

"But, Aña! Why did he let you go, knowing that you would give the alarm?"

"He didn't let me go." Her petaled lips parted in a faint smile. "I escaped. Unani Assu tied me to a tree by the _igarapé_. Because he doesn't ... hate me, he could not bear to tie me too tightly."

"Then he must be close to the laboratory now. If he breaks in upon Aimu--oh, my God!"

Hale remembered the death-projector. If Sir Basil were in danger of

attack, he would not hesitate to touch the waiting button that would broadcast death throughout the world.

He seized Aña's little hand and cried out: "Run, Aña! The only safe place now is Aimu's laboratory. Run!"

* * * * *

As they dashed on madly, Hale opened wide his nostrils to scent the heavy, flower-laden air of the jungle. Any moment all this sweet, rich life might vanish instantly. He had a horrible vision of a world devoid of life, a world of bare rocks, dry sand, odorless, dead waters. For it was life that greened the landscape, roughened the stones with moss and lichen, thickened the ocean with ooze, and turned the dry sand into loam--life that swarmed underfoot, overhead, all around!

And now, just as they reached the laboratory door, panting and frantic, a hoarse shriek broke forth. Dragging Aña after him, Hale dashed forward, conscious of two masculine voices raised in passion.

The door to the room where the life-machine performed its vile work was locked. Hale pounded against it and called out to Sir Basil, but only curses and the sound of tumbling bodies came from beyond the door. Although originally the door had been thick and strong, the destructive forces of the tropics had pitted and rotted the wood. A few blows of Hale's shoulder broke it down.

Under the brilliant electric light, Sir Basil and Unani Assu were fighting upon the blood-spattered floor. The struggle was uneven: the scientist's emaciated body was no match for the splendid strength of the young Indian.

"Help Aimu!" cried Aña, pushing Hale forward.

Aimu was being choked to death.

Hale acted fantastically but efficiently. Catching up a bottle of ammonia, he moistened a handkerchief and clapped it against Unani Assu's nose. Instantly the Indian choked, released Sir Basil, and fell back, gasping for breath.

Hale thrust the handkerchief into his pocket.

"Get out!" he ordered Unani Assu. "Quick!" He threatened him with the ammonia bottle.

But Unani Assu was not looking at the bottle. "Aimu!" he screamed, pointing.

* * * * *

When Hale saw and understood, he leaped across the room to plant his body in front of Aña; for Sir Basil was behind the life-machine, reaching for the controls of the ray projector.

Suddenly, from behind Hale, a silver streak shot across the room. Sir Basil groaned and sank to the floor of the laboratory.

A keen-bladed dissecting knife, thrown by Aña, stuck out from his left breast.

Aña ran forward, sobbing wildly. "Oh, Aimu! I'm sorry! I didn't mean for it to strike you there. Only your hand, Aimu! I didn't want Hale to die, Aimu. I didn't--oh!"

She was on her knees by the scientist's side, his head held in her slender arms.

"He's breathing!" she rejoiced. "Some _masata_, Hale, quick!"

Hale found a bottle of good brandy which he had contributed from his own supplies. Soon Sir Basil gasped and opened his eyes. He stared about him wildly, then gasped:

"I'm dying, Hale Oakham! Quick, the life-machine, before my mind-electron escapes."

He tried to pull his body up, but fell back, weak and panting.

Hale hesitated, looking doubtfully at Aña.

"For God's sake, quick!" screamed Sir Basil. "I'm dying, I say! I must have--rebirth. Lift me to the disintegrator. Hurry!..." His voice trailed off faintly.

"He is dying," snapped Hale. "We might as well try it." He jerked open the door to the disintegrator. "Here, Unani Assu! Lend a hand!"

* * * * *

Instantly the Indian came forward, a peculiar, pleased expression on his handsome face. In a moment, Sir Basil's body was inside, and the machine began its weird humming, the humming that indicated the transformation of a human body into dust.

"Now!" cried Unani Assu exultingly, going behind the machine. "I have helped him enough to understand that if one changes this--and this--and this"--he made some rapid adjustments on the machine--"something that is

not pleasant will happen."

"Stop!" cried Hale. "What did you change?"

The Indian laughed mockingly. "Wouldn't you like to know? But, yet, you should not worry. You have no cause to love him, have you?"

"I can't be a traitor, Unani Assu! Arrange the machine as it was originally, and I give you my word of honor than when Sir Basil comes out, I'll wreck the damned thing beyond repair. See, Unani Assu? You and I together will smash it."

The Indian folded his arms so that the repulsive things that should have been hands were hidden.

"It's too late now," he admitted, shaking his head. "Yet I've done no more to him than he did to me."

Hale went to the eye-piece in the machine and started to look inside. Unani Assu stepped forward, tapped him on the shoulder, and, fingering significantly the dissecting knife which he had picked up, said:

"I am operating the machine. Will you sit over there by Aña and wait? It won't be long. And, white stranger, remember this: I am your friend. I am turned against none but our common enemy." He pointed significantly to the machine.

* * * * *

Two hours passed, long, silent hours for the watchers in the laboratory. Aña fell asleep, in a sweet, childish bundle upon the piled cushions, her golden hair, still decorated with the red flowers which she always wore, crushed and withered now. Several times Hale caught Unani Assu gazing at her sadly, and his own look saddened when it rested on the Indian's strong, outraged body.

The humming of the machine changed to a whistle. Placing his fingers on his lips in a signal of quiet, Unani Assu whispered:

"Let Aña sleep. She mustn't see this."

Opening a door in the machine, his handsome face lighted with a grim smile, he whispered exultingly:

"Watch!"

A scuttling sound issued forth and then, half drunkenly, an enormous rat tumbled out--one of those horrible rats with the hairless, humanlike faces that had so frequently come from the life-machine.

Hale could not crush back the cry that issued from his throat.

"Where is Sir Basil?" he gasped.

"There!" cried the Indian, pointing to the kicking rat, which was fast gaining strength.

* * * * *

Hale staggered back. "No! You don't mean it, do you?"

Unani Assu turned the rat over with a contemptuous toe. "Yes, I mean it. Behold Aimu, the man who thought himself creator and destroyer--the man who said that a human being was no higher than a rat! Perhaps he was right, for see this thing that was once a man!"

Hale buried his face in his hands. "Kill it, Unani Assu! Kill it!"

Unani Assu's low laugh was metallic. "You kill it."

Hale uncovered his face. "Open the disintegrator." Gingerly he reached for the rat's tail.

But his hand never touched the animal. The hairless face turned for a second, and the little, beady eyes blinked up at Hale with an expression that his fevered imagination thought almost human. Then, like a dark shadow, the rat dashed away. Once around the room it scampered, hunting for an exit. Hale started in pursuit. He was almost upon the animal again, when, leaping up from his grasp, it landed on a low shelf where chemicals were stored. Several bottles fell, filling the room with fumes.

Another bottle fell, and, suddenly, amid a thunderous roar, the ceiling and walls began falling. Some highly explosive chemical had been stored in one of the bottles.

Hale was thrown violently against the couch. His hand touched Aña's body. One last shred of consciousness enabled him to pick her up and drag her out. In the open, he fell, aware, before blackness descended, that flames leaped high over the laboratory building and that Unani Assu lay dead within.

* * * * *

Hale and Aña, leaning over the deck-rail of a small steam launch, gazed into the dark waters of the Amazon.

"We ought to reach Para by morning," said Hale, "and then, dearest,

we're off for New York!"

Aña, wearing one of the first civilized dresses she had ever donned, and looking as smart as any débutante, slipped her little hand into her husband's.

"Isn't it a shame, Hale," she moaned, "that the fire burned all the animals and insects, the machinery, and even your notes?" Her beautiful face saddened. "Just one or two specimens might have been proof enough for your What-You-Call-It Club!"

"The Nescience Club, darling. No, I can't expect to win the Woolman prize, but I've won a prize worth far more." He squeezed her little hand and looked devotedly into her blue eyes. "And, Aña, I've reasoned out something concerning mind-electrons which even Sir Basil overlooked."

"What is it, Hale?"

"He maintained that matter seeks always to enslave mind-electrons, but I am convinced that mind-electrons seek to enslave matter. Understand? It's creation, Aña! Had Sir Basil succeeded in broadcasting death throughout the world, the freed mind-electrons, as in the beginning, would have started again to vitalize inorganic atoms. And, in a few million years, which is no time to the Mind, the world would be humming with a new civilization. Large thought, eh, sweetheart?"

PROSE

77. ABIGAIL ADAMS.
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Familiar Letters of John Adams and His Wife Abigail Adams During the Revolution*

5 November, 1775.

I hope you have received several letters from me in this fortnight past. I wrote by Mr. Lynch and by Dr. Franklin, the latter of whom I had the pleasure of dining with, and of admiring him, whose character from my infancy I had been taught to venerate. I found him social, but not talkative, and when he spoke, something useful dropped from his tongue. He was grave, yet pleasant and affable. You know I make some pretensions to physiognomy, and I thought I could read in his countenance the virtues of his heart, among which patriotism shone in its full lustre, and with that is blended every virtue of a Christian: for a true patriot must be a religious man. I have been led to think from a late defection,[113] that he who neglects his duty to his Maker may well be

expected to be deficient and insincere in his duty towards the public. Even suppose him to possess a large share of what is called honor and public spirit, yet do not these men, by their bad example, by a loose, immoral conduct, corrupt the minds of youth and vitiate the morals of the age, and thus injure the public more than they can compensate by intrepidity, generosity, and honor? Let revenge or ambition, pride, lust, or profit, tempt these men to a base and vile action, you may as well hope to bind up a hungry tiger with a cobweb, as to hold such debauched patriots in the visionary chains of decency, or to charm them with the intellectual beauty of truth and reason.

But where am I running? I mean to thank you for all your obliging favors lately received; and, though some of them are very laconic, yet, were they to contain only two lines to tell me that you were well, they would be acceptable to me. I think, however, you are more apprehensive than you need be; the gentleman to whose care they have always been directed has been very kind in his conveyance, and very careful. I hope that it will not now be long before we shall have nearer interviews. You must tell me that you will return next month; a late appointment[114] will make it inconvenient (provided you accept) for you to go again to Congress.

It seems human nature is the same in all ages and countries. Ambition and avarice reign everywhere, and where they predominate, there will be bickerings after places of honor and profit. There is an old adage, "Kissing goes by favor," that is daily verified. I inclose to you the paper you sent for. Your business in collecting facts will be very difficult, and the sufferings of this people cannot be described with pen, ink, and paper. Besides, these ministers of Satan are rendering it every day more and more difficult, by their ravages and devastation, to tell a tale which will freeze the young blood of succeeding generations, as well as harrow up the souls of the present.

Nothing new has transpired since I wrote you last. I have not heard of one person's escape out of town, nor of any manoeuvre of any kind.

I will only ask you to measure by your own the affectionate regard of your nearest friend.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 113: Of Dr. Church.]

[Footnote 114: Of Chief Justice.]

78. ABIGAIL ADAMS.

Braintree, 12 November, 1775.

I received yours of 23d October. I want to hear from you every day, and I always feel sorry when I come to the close of a letter. Your time must be greatly engrossed--but little of it to spare to the calls of private friendship, and I have reason to think I have the largest share of it. Winter makes its approaches fast. I hope I shall not be obliged to spend it without my dearest friend. I know not how to think of it.

The intelligence[115] you will receive before this reaches you will, I should think, make a plain path, though a dangerous one, for you. I could not join to-day in the petitions of our worthy pastor, for a reconciliation between our no longer parent state, but tyrant state, and these colonies. Let us separate; they are unworthy to be our brethren. Let us renounce them; and instead of supplications, as formerly, for their prosperity and happiness, let us beseech the Almighty to blast their counsels and bring to nought all their devices.

I have nothing remarkable to write you. A little skirmish happened last week. The particulars I have endeavored to collect, but whether I have the facts right, I am not certain. A number of cattle were kept at Lechmere's Point, where two sentinels were placed. In a high tide it is an island. The regulars had observed this, and a scheme was laid to send a number of them over and take off the stock. Accordingly, a number of boats and about four hundred men were sent. They landed, it seems, unperceived by the sentinels, who were asleep; one of whom they killed, and took the other prisoner. As soon as they were perceived, they fired the cannon from Prospect Hill upon them, which sunk one of their boats; but, as the tide was very high, it was difficult getting over, and some time before any alarm was given. A Colonel Thompson, of the riflemen, marched instantly with his men; and, though a very stormy day, they regarded not the tide nor waited for boats, but marched over neck-high in water, and discharged their pieces, when the regulars ran, without waiting to get off their stock, and made the best of their way to the opposite shore.[116] The General sent his thanks in a public manner to the brave officer and his men. Major Mifflin, I hear, was there, and flew about as though he would have raised the whole army. May they never find us deficient in courage and spirit.

Dr. Franklin invited me to spend the winter in Philadelphia. I shall wish to be there unless you return. I have been like a nun in a cloister, ever since you went away, and have not been into any other house than my father's and sister's, except once to Colonel Quincy's. Indeed, I have no inclination for company. My evenings are lonesome and melancholy. In the daytime family affairs take off my attention, but the evenings are spent with my departed parent. I then ruminate upon all her care and tenderness, and am sometimes lost and absorbed in a flood of

tenderness ere I am aware of it, or can call to my aid my only prop and support. I must bid you adieu; 't is late at night.

Most affectionately yours.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 115: This may refer to the act of the Provincial Congress authorizing privateering, passed a day or two before.]

[Footnote 116: Some account of this affair is given in the _Remembrancer_ for 1776, Vol. I. p. 229; Sparks's _Writings of Washington_, Vol. III. p. 157.]

79. ABIGAIL ADAMS.

27 November, 1775.

Colonel Warren returned last week to Plymouth, so that I shall not hear anything from you until he goes back again, which will not be till the last of this month. He damped my spirits greatly by telling me that the Court[117] had prolonged your stay another month. I was pleasing myself with the thought that you would soon be upon your return. It is in vain to repine. I hope the public will reap what I sacrifice.

I wish I knew what mighty things were fabricating. If a form of government is to be established here, what one will be assumed? Will it be left to our Assemblies to choose one? And will not many men have many minds? And shall we not run into dissensions among ourselves?

I am more and more convinced that man is a dangerous creature; and that power, whether vested in many or a few, is ever grasping, and, like the grave, cries, "Give, give!" The great fish swallow up the small; and he who is most strenuous for the rights of the people, when vested with power, is as eager after the prerogatives of government. You tell me of degrees of perfection to which human nature is capable of arriving, and I believe it, but at the same time lament that our admiration should arise from the scarcity of the instances.

The building up a great empire, which was only hinted at by my correspondent, may now, I suppose, be realized even by the unbelievers. Yet, will not ten thousand difficulties arise in the formation of it? The reins of government have been so long slackened, that I fear the people will not quietly submit to those restraints which are necessary for the peace and security of the community. If we separate from

Britain, what code of laws will be established? How shall we be governed so as to retain our liberties? Can any government be free which is not administered by general stated laws? Who shall frame these laws? Who will give them force and energy? It is true, your resolutions, as a body, have hitherto had the force of laws; but will they continue to have?

When I consider these things, and the prejudices of people in favor of ancient customs and regulations, I feel anxious for the fate of our monarchy, or democracy, or whatever is to take place. I soon get lost in a labyrinth of perplexities; but, whatever occurs, may justice and righteousness be the stability of our times, and order arise out of confusion. Great difficulties may be surmounted by patience and perseverance.

I believe I have tired you with politics. As to news, we have not any at all. I shudder at the approach of winter, when I think I am to remain desolate.

I must bid you good night; 't is late for me, who am much of an invalid. I was disappointed last week in receiving a packet by the post, and, upon unsealing it, finding only four newspapers. I think you are more cautious than you need be. All letters, I believe, have come safe to hand. I have sixteen from you, and wish I had as many more. Adieu.

Yours.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 117: The legislative government.]

80. JOHN ADAMS.

Philadelphia, 3 December, 1775.

My best Friend,--Yours of November 12th[118] is before me. I wish I could write you every day, more than once, for although I have a number of friends and many relations who are very dear to me, yet all the friendship I have for others is far unequal to that which warms my heart for you. The most agreeable time that I spend here is in writing to you, and conversing with you, when I am alone. But the call of friendship and of private affection must give place to that of duty and honor. Even private friendship and affections require it.

I am obliged, by the nature of the service I am in, to correspond with

many gentlemen, both of the army and of the two houses of Assembly, which takes up much of my time. How I find time to write half the letters I do, I know not, for my whole time seems engrossed with business. The whole Congress is taken up, almost, in different committees, from seven to ten in the morning. From ten to four or sometimes five, we are in Congress, and from six to ten in committees again. I don't mention this to make you think me a man of importance, because it is not I alone,[119] but the whole Congress is thus employed, but to apologize for not writing to you oftener.

Indeed, I know not what to write that is worth your reading. I send you the papers, which inform you of what is public. As to what passes in Congress, I am tied fast by my honor to communicate nothing. I hope the Journal of the Session will be published soon, and then you will see what we have been about in one view, excepting what ought to be excepted. If I could visit the coffee-houses in the evening, and the coffee-tables of the ladies in the afternoon, I could entertain you with many smart remarks upon dress and air, etc., and give you many sprightly conversations, but my fate, you know, is to be moping over books and papers all the leisure time I have, when I have any.

I hope I shall be excused from coming to Philadelphia again, at least until other gentlemen have taken their turns. But I never will come here again without you, if I can persuade you to come with me. Whom God has joined together ought not to be put asunder so long, with their own consent. We will bring master Johnny with us; you and he shall have the small-pox here, and we will be as happy as Mr. Hancock and his lady. Thank Abby and John for their letters, and kiss Charles and Tom for me. John writes like a hero, glowing with ardor for his country and burning with indignation against her enemies.

As to coming home, I have no thoughts of it; shall stay here till the year is out, for what I know. Affairs are in a critical state, and important steps are now taking every day, so that I could not reconcile it to my own mind to be absent from this place at present. Nothing is expected from the Commissioners, yet we are waiting for them in some respects. The Tories and timids pretend to expect great things from them. But the generality expect nothing but more insults and affronts. Privateering is licensed, and the ports are wide open. As soon as the resolves are printed, which will be to-morrow, I will send them.

FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 118: No. 78, p. 123.]

[Footnote 119: During his term of service in Congress, he was a member of ninety, and chairman of twenty-five committees.]

MARY WASHINGTON.
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Women of The American Revolution, Vol 1* (of 2), by Elizabeth F. Ellet

|The Mother of Washington! There needs no eulogy to awaken the associations which cling around that sacred name. Our hearts do willing homage to the venerated parent of the chief--=

```"Who 'mid his elements of being wrought

```With no uncertain aim--nursing the germs

```Of godlike virtue in his infant mind."=

The contemplation of Washington's character naturally directs attention to her whose maternal care guided and guarded his early years. What she did, and the blessing of a world that follows her--teach impressively--while showing the power--the duty of those who mould the characters of the age to come. The principles and conduct of this illustrious matron were closely interwoven with the destinies of her son. Washington ever acknowledged that he owed everything to his mother--in the education and habits of his early life. His high moral principle, his perfect self-possession, his clear and sound judgment, his inflexible resolution and untiring application--were developed by her training and example. A believer in the truths of religion, she inculcated a strict obedience to its injunctions. She planted the seed, and cherished the growth, which bore such rich and glorious fruit. La Fayette observed that she belonged rather to the age of Sparta or Rome, than to modern times; she was a mother formed on the ancient model, and by her elevation of character and matchless discipline, fitted to lay the foundation of the greatness of him who towered "beyond all Greek--beyond all Roman fame."

The course of Mrs. Washington's life, exhibiting her qualities of mind and heart, proved her fitness for the high trust committed to her hands. She was remarkable for vigor of intellect, strength of resolution, and inflexible firmness wherever principle was concerned. Devoted to the education of her children, her parental government and guidance have been described by those who knew her as admirably adapted to train the youthful mind to wisdom and virtue. With her, affection was regulated by a calm and just judgment. She was distinguished, moreover, by that well marked quality of genius, a power of acquiring and maintaining influence over those with whom she associated. Without inquiring into the philosophy of this mysterious ascendancy, she was content to employ it for the noblest ends. It contributed, no doubt, to deepen the effect of her instructions.

The life of Mrs. Washington, so useful in the domestic sphere, did not abound in incident. She passed through the trials common to those who lived amid the scenes of the Revolutionary era. She saw the son whom she had taught to be _good_--whom she had reared in the principles of true honor, walking the perilous path of duty with firm step, leading his country to independence, and crowned with his reward--a nation's gratitude; yet in all these changes, her simple, earnest nature remained the same. She loved to speak, in her latter days, of her boy's merits in his early life, and of his filial affection and duty; but never dwelt on the glory he had won as the deliverer of his country, the chief magistrate of a great republic. This was because her ambition was too high for the pride that inspires and rewards common souls. The greatness she discerned and acknowledged in the object of her solicitous tenderness was beyond that which this world most esteems.
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The only memoir of the mother of Washington extant, is the one written by George W. P. Custis, the grandson of Martha Washington, and published more than twenty years ago in his "Recollections" in the National Gazette. These reminiscences were collected by him in the course of many years; and to them we are indebted for all that is known of the life and actions of this matron. According to these, she was descended from the respectable family of Ball, who came to this country and settled on the banks of the Potomac. In the old days of Virginia, women were taught habits of industry and self-reliance, and in these Mrs. Washington was nurtured. The early death of her husband involved her in the cares of a young family with limited resources, which rendered prudence and economy necessary to provide for and educate her children. Thus circumstanced, it was left to her unassisted efforts to form in her son's mind, those essential qualities which gave tone and character to his subsequent life. George was only twelve years old at his father's death, and retained merely the remembrance of his person, and his parental fondness. Two years after this event, he obtained a midshipman's warrant; but his mother opposed the plan, and the idea of entering the naval service was relinquished.

The home in which Mrs. Washington presided, was a sanctuary of the domestic virtues. The levity of youth was there tempered by a well regulated restraint, and the enjoyments rational and proper for that age were indulged in with moderation. The future chief was taught the duty of obedience, and was thus prepared to command. The mother's authority never departed from her, even when her son had attained the height of his renown; for she ruled by the affection which had controlled his spirit when he needed a guardian; and she claimed a reverence next to that due to his Creator. This claim he admitted, mingling the deepest respect with enthusiastic attachment, and yielding to her will the most implicit obedience, even to the latest hours of her life. One of the associates of his juvenile years, Lawrence Washington, of Chotank, thus speaks of his home:

"I was often therewith George, his playmate, schoolmate, and young man's companion. Of the mother I was ten times more afraid than I ever was of my own parents; she awed me in the midst of her kindness, for she was indeed truly kind. And even now, when time has whitened my locks, and I am the grandparent of a second generation, I could not behold that majestic woman without feelings it is impossible to describe. Whoever has seen that awe-inspiring air and manner, so characteristic of the Father of his country, will remember the matron as she appeared, the presiding genius of her well-ordered household, commanding and being obeyed." Educated under such influences, it is not to be wondered at that Washington's deportment towards his mother at all times, testified his appreciation of her elevated character, and the excellence of her lessons.

"On his appointment to the command-in-chief of the American armies," says Mr. Custis, "previously to his joining the forces at Cambridge, he removed his mother from her country residence, to the village of Fredericksburg, a situation remote from danger and contiguous to her friends and relatives. There she remained, during nearly the whole of the trying period of the Revolution. Directly in the way of the news, as it passed from north to south; one courier would bring intelligence of success to our arms; another, "swiftly coursing at his heels," the saddening reverse of disaster and defeat. While thus ebbed and flowed the fortunes of our cause, the mother, trusting to the wisdom and protection of Divine Providence, preserved the even tenor of her life; affording an example to those matrons whose sons were alike engaged in the arduous contest; and showing that unavailing anxieties, however belonging to nature, were unworthy of mothers whose sons were combating for the inestimable rights of man,

and the freedom and happiness of the world."

When news arrived of the passage of the Delaware in December, 1776, the mother received calmly the patriots who came with congratulations; and while expressing pleasure at the intelligence, disclaimed for her son the praises in the letters from which extracts were read. When informed by express of the surrender of Cornwallis, she lifted her hands in gratitude towards heaven, and exclaimed, "Thank God! war will now be ended, and peace, independence and happiness bless our country!"

Her housewifery, industry, and care in the management of her domestic concerns, were not intermitted during the war. "She looketh well to the ways of her household," and "worketh willingly with her hands," said the wise man, in describing a virtuous woman; and it was the pride of the exemplary women of that day, to fill the station of mistress with usefulness as well as dignity. Mrs. Washington was remarkable for a simplicity which modern refinement might call severe, but which became her not less when her fortunes were clouded, than when the sun of glory arose upon her house. Some of the aged inhabitants of Fredericksburg long remembered the matron, "as seated in an old-fashioned open chaise she was in the habit of visiting, almost daily, her little farm in the vicinity of the town. When there, she would ride about her fields, giving her orders and seeing that they were obeyed." When on one occasion an agent departed from his instructions--she reproved him for exercising his own judgment in the matter; "I command you," she said; "there is nothing left for you but to obey."

Her charity to the poor was well known; and having not wealth to distribute, it was necessary that what her benevolence dispensed should be supplied by domestic economy and industry. How peculiar a grace does this impart to the benefits flowing from a sympathizing heart!

It is thus that she has been pictured in the imagination of one of our most gifted poets. *

* Mrs. Sigourney, in her poetical tribute on the occasion of laying the corner-stone for the monument,

```"Melhinks we see thee, as in olden time,

```Simple in garb, majestic and serene,--

```Unawed by 'pomp and circumstances'--in truth

```Inflexible--and with a Spartan zeal

```Repressing vice, and making folly grave.

```Thou didst not deem it woman's part to waste

```Life in inglorious sloth, to sport awhile

```Amid the flowers, or on the summer wave,

```Then fleet like the ephemeron away,

```Building no temple in her children's hearts,

```Save to the vanity and pride of life

```Which she had worshipped."=

Mr. Custis states that she was continually visited and solaced, in the retirement of her declining years, by her children and numerous grandchildren. Her daughter, Mrs. Lewis, repeatedly and earnestly solicited her to remove to her house, and there pass the remainder of her days. Her son pressingly entreated her that she would make Mount Vernon the home of her age. But the matron's answer was: "I thank you for your affectionate and dutiful offers, but my wants are few in this world, and I feel perfectly competent to take care of myself." To the proposition of her son-in-law, Colonel Lewis, to relieve her by taking the direction of her concerns, she replied: "Do you, Fielding, keep my books in order; for your

eyesight is better than mine: but leave the executive management to me." Such were the energy and independence she preserved to an age beyond that usually allotted to mortals, and, till within three years other death, when the disease under which she suffered (cancer of the breast), prevented exertion.

Her meeting with Washington, after the victory which decided the fortune of America, illustrates her character too strikingly to be omitted. "After an absence of nearly seven years, it was, at length, on the return of the combined armies from Yorktown, permitted to the mother again to see and embrace her illustrious son. So soon as he had dismounted, in the midst of a numerous and brilliant suite, he sent to apprize her of his arrival, and to know when it would be her pleasure to receive him. And now, mark the force of early education and habits, and the superiority of the Spartan over the Persian schools, in this interview of the great Washington with his admirable parent and instructor. No pageantry of war proclaimed his coming--no trumpets sounded--no banners waved. Alone, and on foot, the marshal of France, the general-in-chief of the combined armies of France and America, the deliverer of his country, the hero of the age, repaired to pay his humble duty to her whom he venerated as the author of his being, the founder of his fortune and his fame. For full well he knew that the matron was made of sterner stuff than to be moved by all the pride that glory ever gave, or by all the 'pomp and circumstance' of power.

"The lady was alone--her aged hands employed in the works of domestic industry, when the good news was announced; and it was further told, that the victor-chief was in waiting at the threshold. She welcomed him with a warm embrace, and by the well-remembered and endearing names of his childhood. Inquiring as to his health, she remarked the lines which mighty cares, and many trials, had made on his manly countenance--spoke much of old times, and old friends; but of his glory, _not one word!_

"Meantime, in the village of Fredericksburg, all was joy and revelry. The town was crowded with the officers of the French and American armies, and with gentlemen from all the country around, who hastened to welcome the conquerors of Cornwallis. The citizens made arrangements for a splendid ball, to which the mother of Washington was specially invited. She observed, that although her dancing days were _pretty well over_, she should feel happy in contributing to the general festivity, and consented to attend.

"The foreign officers were anxious to see the mother of their chief. They had heard indistinct rumors respecting her remarkable life and character; but forming their judgment from European examples, they were prepared to expect in the mother, that glare and show which would have been attached to the parents of the great in the old world. How were they surprised when the matron, leaning on the arm of her son, entered the room! She was arrayed in the very plain, yet becoming garb worn by the Virginia lady of the olden time. Her address, always dignified and imposing, was courteous, though reserved. She received the complimentary attentions which were profusely paid her, without evincing the slightest elevation; and at an early hour, wishing the company much enjoyment of their pleasures, and observing that it was time for old people to be at home, retired, leaning as before, on the arm of her son.

To this picture may be added another:

"The Marquis de La Fayette repaired to Fredericksburg, previous to his departure for Europe, in the fall of 1784, to pay his parting respects to the mother, and to ask her blessing. Conducted by one of her grandsons, he approached the house, when the young gentleman observed: 'There, sir, is my

grandmother.' La Fayette beheld--working in the garden, clad in domestic-made clothes, and her grey head covered with a plain straw hat--the mother of 'his hero, his friend and a country's preserver!' The lady saluted him kindly, observing, 'Ah, marquis! you see an old woman; but come, I can make you welcome to my poor dwelling, without the parade of changing my dress.'"

To the encomiums lavished by the marquis on his chief, the mother replied: "Iam not surprised at what George has done, for he was always a very good boy." So simple in her true greatness of soul, was this remarkable woman.

Her piety was ardent; and she associated devotion with the grand and beautiful in nature. She was in the habit of repairing every day for prayer to a secluded spot, formed by rocks and trees, near her dwelling.

After the organization of the government, Washington repaired to Fredericksburg, to announce to his mother his election to the chief magistracy, and bid her farewell, before assuming the duties of his office. Her aged frame was bowed down by disease; and she felt that they were parting to meet no more in this world. But she bade him go, with heaven's blessing and her own, to fulfil the high destinies to which he had been called. Washington was deeply affected, and wept at the parting.

The person of Mrs. Washington is described as being of the medium height, and well proportioned--her features pleasing, though strongly marked. There were few painters in the colonies in those days, and no portrait of her is in existence. Her biographer saw her but with infant eyes; but well remembers the sister of the chief. Of her we are told nothing, except that "she was a most majestic woman, and so strikingly like the brother, that it was a matter of frolic to throw a cloak around her, and place a military hat upon her head; and such was the perfect resemblance, that had she appeared on her brother's steed, battalions would have presented arms, and senates risen to do homage to the chief."

Mrs. Washington died at the age of eighty-five, rejoicing in the consciousness of a life well spent, and the hope of a blessed immortality. Her ashes repose at Fredericksburg, where a splendid monument has been erected to her memory.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1787
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by Founding Fathers

We the people of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article 1

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the State legislature.

No Person shall be a Representative who shall not have attained to the Age of twenty five Years, and been seven Years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective Numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free Persons, including those bound to Service for a Term of Years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three fifths of all other Persons. The actual Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by law Direct. The number of Representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty Thousand, but each State shall have at least one Representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the State of New Hampshire shall be entitled to chuse three, Massachusetts eight, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations one, Connecticut five, New York six, New Jersey four, Pennsylvania eight, Delaware one, Maryland six, Virginia ten, North Carolina five, South Carolina five, and Georgia three.

When vacancies happen in the Representation from any State, the Executive Authority thereof shall issue Writs of Election to fill such Vacancies.

The House of Representatives shall chuse their Speaker and other Officers;

and shall have the sole Power of Impeachment.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the legislature thereof, for six Years; and each Senator shall have one Vote.

Immediately after they shall be assembled in Consequence of the first Election, they shall be divided as equally as may be into three Classes. The Seats of the Senators of the first Class shall be vacated at the expiration of the second Year, of the second Class at the expiration of the fourth Year, and of the third Class at the expiration of the sixth Year, so that one third may be chosen every second Year; and if vacancies happen by Resignation, or otherwise, during the recess of the Legislature of any State, the Executive thereof may make temporary Appointments until the next meeting of the Legislature, which shall then fill such Vacancies.

No person shall be a Senator who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty Years, and been nine Years a Citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an Inhabitant of that State for which he shall be chosen.

The Vice-President of the United States shall be President of the Senate, but shall have no Vote, unless they be equally divided.

The Senate shall choose their other Officers, and also a President pro tempore, in the Absence of the Vice-President, or when he shall exercise the Office of President of the United States.

The Senate shall have the sole Power to try all Impeachments. When sitting for that Purpose, they shall be on Oath or Affirmation. When the President of the United States is tried, the Chief Justice shall preside: And no Person shall be convicted without the Concurrence of two thirds of the Members present.

Judgment in cases of Impeachment shall not extend further than to removal from Office, and disqualification to hold and enjoy any Office of honor, Trust or Profit under the United States: but the Party convicted shall nevertheless be liable and subject to Indictment, Trial, Judgment and Punishment, according to Law.

Section 4. The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing Senators.

The Congress shall assemble at least once in every Year, and such Meeting shall be on the first Monday in December, unless they shall by law appoint a different Day.

Section 5. Each House shall be the Judge of the Elections,
Returns and Qualifications of its own Members, and a
Majority of each shall constitute a Quorum to do Business;
but a smaller Number may adjourn from day to day,
and may be authorized to compel the Attendance of absent Members,
in such Manner, and under such Penalties as each House may provide.

Each house may determine the Rules of its Proceedings,
punish its Members for disorderly Behavior, and, with the
Concurrence of two-thirds, expel a Member.

Each house shall keep a Journal of its Proceedings,
and from time to time publish the same, excepting such Parts as may
in their Judgment require Secrecy; and the Yeas and Nays of the
Members of either House on any question shall, at the Desire of
one fifth of those Present, be entered on the Journal.

Neither House, during the Session of Congress, shall, without the
Consent of the other, adjourn for more than three days, nor to
any other Place than that in which the two Houses shall be sitting.

Section 6. The Senators and Representatives shall receive a Compensation
for their Services, to be ascertained by Law, and paid out of the Treasury
of the United States. They shall in all Cases, except Treason, Felony and
Breach of the Peace, be privileged from Arrest during their Attendance
at the Session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning
from the same; and for any Speech or Debate in either House,
they shall not be questioned in any other Place.

No Senator or Representative shall, during the Time for which he was elected,
be appointed to any civil Office under the authority of the United States,
which shall have been created, or the Emoluments whereof shall have been
increased during such time; and no Person holding any Office under the
United States, shall be a Member of either House during his Continuance
in Office.

Section 7. All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the
House of Representatives; but the Senate may propose or concur with
Amendments as on other Bills.

Every Bill which shall have passed the House of Representatives and
the Senate, shall, before it become a Law, be presented to the
President of the United States; If he approve he shall sign it,
but if not he shall return it, with his Objections to that House
in which it shall have originated, who shall enter the Objections
at large on their Journal, and proceed to reconsider it.
If after such Reconsideration two thirds of that house
shall agree to pass the Bill, it shall be sent,

together with the Objections, to the other House, by which it shall likewise be reconsidered, and if approved by two thirds of that House, it shall become a law. But in all such Cases the Votes of both Houses shall be determined by Yeas and Nays, and the Names of the Persons voting for and against the Bill shall be entered on the Journal of each House respectively. If any Bill shall not be returned by the President within ten Days (Sundays excepted) after it shall have been presented to him, the Same shall be a Law, in like Manner as if he had signed it, unless the Congress by their Adjournment prevent its Return, in which case it shall not be a Law.

Every Order, Resolution, or Vote to which the Concurrence of the Senate and House of Representatives may be necessary (except on a question of Adjournment) shall be presented to the President of the United States; and before the Same shall take Effect, shall be approved by him, or being disapproved by him, shall be repassed by two thirds of the Senate and House of Representatives, according to the Rules and Limitations prescribed in the Case of a Bill.

Section 8. The Congress shall have Power to lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;

To borrow Money on the credit of the United States;

To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;

To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;

To coin Money, regulate the Value thereof, and of foreign Coin, and fix the Standard of Weights and Measures;

To provide for the Punishment of counterfeiting the Securities and current Coin of the United States;

To establish Post Offices and Post Roads;

To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries;

To constitute Tribunals inferior to the supreme Court;

To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;

To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal,
and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;

To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use
shall be for a longer term than two Years;

To provide and maintain a Navy;

To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;

To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union,
suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;

To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for
governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the
United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment
of the Officers, and the Authority of training the militia according
to the discipline prescribed by Congress;

To exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever,
over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may,
by Cession of particular States, and the Acceptance of Congress,
become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to
exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent
of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be,
for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, Dockyards,
and other needful Buildings;--And

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying
into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested
by this Constitution in the Government of the United States,
or in any Department or Officer thereof.

Section 9. The Migration or Importation of such Persons as any
of the States now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not
be prohibited by the Congress prior to the Year one thousand eight
hundred and eight, but a Tax or Duty may be imposed on such Importation,
not exceeding ten dollars for each Person.

The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless
when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it.

No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law shall be passed.

No Capitation, or other direct, Tax shall be laid, unless in Proportion
to the Census or Enumeration herein before directed to be taken.

No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State.

No Preference shall be given by any Regulation of Commerce or Revenue to the Ports of one State over those of another: nor shall Vessels bound to, or from, one State, be obliged to enter, clear, or pay Duties in another.

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law; and a regular Statement and Account of the Receipts and Expenditures of all public Money shall be published from time to time.

No Title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States; and no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.

Section 10. No State shall enter into any Treaty, Alliance, or Confederation; grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal; coin Money; emit Bills of Credit; make any Thing but gold and silver Coin a Tender in Payment of Debts; pass any Bill of Attainder, ex post facto Law, or Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts, or grant any Title of Nobility.

No State shall, without the Consent of the Congress, lay any Imposts or Duties on Imports or Exports, except what may be absolutely necessary for executing it's inspection Laws: and the net Produce of all Duties and Imposts, laid by any State on Imports or Exports, shall be for the Use of the Treasury of the United States; and all such Laws shall be subject to the Revision and Controul of the Congress.

No State shall, without the Consent of Congress, lay any Duty of Tonnage, keep Troops, or Ships of War in time of Peace, enter into any Agreement or Compact with another State, or with a foreign Power, or engage in War, unless actually invaded, or in such imminent Danger as will not admit of delay.

ARTICLE 2

Section 1. The executive Power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America. He shall hold his Office during the Term of four Years, and, together with the Vice President chosen for the same Term, be elected, as follows:

Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors, equal to the whole Number of Senators and Representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress: but no Senator or Representative, or Person holding an Office of Trust or Profit under the United States, shall be appointed an Elector.

The Electors shall meet in their respective States, and vote by Ballot

for two Persons, of whom one at least shall not be an Inhabitant of
the same State with themselves. And they shall make a List of
all the Persons voted for, and of the Number of Votes for each;
which List they shall sign and certify, and transmit sealed to
the Seat of the Government of the United States, directed to the
President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall,
in the Presence of the Senate and House of Representatives,
open all the Certificates, and the Votes shall then be counted.
The Person having the greatest Number of Votes shall be the President,
if such Number be a Majority of the whole Number of Electors appointed;
and if there be more than one who have such Majority, and have an equal
Number of votes, then the House of Representatives shall immediately
chuse by Ballot one of them for President; and if no Person have
a Majority, then from the five highest on the List the said House
shall in like Manner chuse the President. But in chusing the President,
the Votes shall be taken by States, the Representation from each State
having one Vote; a Quorum for this Purpose shall consist of a Member
or Members from two thirds of the States, and a Majority of all the
States shall be necessary to a Choice. In every Case, after the Choice
of the President, the Person having the greatest Number of Votes of
the Electors shall be the Vice President. But if there should remain
two or more who have equal Votes, the Senate shall chuse from them
by Ballot the Vice President.

The Congress may determine the Time of chusing the Electors,
and the Day on which they shall give their Votes; which Day
shall be the same throughout the United States.

No Person except a natural born Citizen, or a Citizen of the United States,
at the time of the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be eligible to
the Office of President; neither shall any Person be eligible to that
Office who shall not have attained to the Age of thirty five Years,
and been fourteen Years a Resident within the United States.

In Case of the Removal of the President from Office, or of his Death,
Resignation, or Inability to discharge the Powers and Duties of the
said Office, the Same shall devolve on the Vice President, and the
Congress may by Law provide for the Case of Removal, Death, Resignation
or Inability, both of the President and Vice President, declaring what
Officer shall then act as President, and such Officer shall act accordingly,
until the Disability be removed, or a President shall be elected.

The President shall, at stated Times, receive for his Services,
a Compensation, which shall neither be encreased nor diminished during
the Period for which he shall have been elected, and he shall not receive
within that Period any other Emolument from the United States, or any of them.

Before he enter on the Execution of his Office, he shall take the
following Oath or Affirmation:--"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that

I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States,
and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the
Constitution of the United States."

Section 2. The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army
and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States,
when called into the actual Service of the United States;
he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer
in each of the executive Departments, upon any Subject relating to
the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power
to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States,
except in Cases of impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the
Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators
present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice
and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public
Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other
Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein
otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law:
but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers,
as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law,
or in the Heads of Departments.

The President shall have Power to fill up all Vacancies that may happen
during the Recess of the Senate, by granting Commissions which shall
expire at the End of their next session.

Section 3. He shall from time to time give to the Congress
Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their
Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient;
he may, on extraordinary Occasions, convene both Houses, or either
of them, and in Case of Disagreement between them, with Respect to
the Time of Adjournment, he may adjourn them to such Time as he shall
think proper; he shall receive Ambassadors and other public Ministers;
he shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed, and shall
Commission all the Officers of the United States.

Section 4. The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the
United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for,
and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors.

ARTICLE THREE

Section 1. The judicial Power of the United States, shall be vested
in one supreme Court, and in such inferior Courts as the Congress may
from time to time ordain and establish. The Judges, both of the supreme
and inferior Courts, shall hold their Offices during good behavior,
and shall, at stated Times, receive for their Services, a Compensation,

which shall not be diminished during their Continuance in Office.

Section 2. The judicial Power shall extend to all Cases, in Law and Equity, arising under this Constitution, the Laws of the United States, and Treaties made, or which shall be made, under their Authority;--to all Cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls;--to all Cases of admiralty and maritime Jurisdiction;--to Controversies to which the United States shall be a Party;--to Controversies between two or more States;--between a State and Citizens of another State;--between Citizens of different States; --between Citizens of the same State claiming Lands under Grants of different States, and between a State, or the Citizens thereof, and foreign States, Citizens or Subjects.

In all cases affecting Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, and those in which a State shall be Party, the supreme Court shall have original Jurisdiction. In all the other Cases before mentioned, the supreme Court shall have appellate Jurisdiction, both as to Law and Fact, with such Exceptions, and under such Regulations as the Congress shall make.

The Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed; but when not committed within any State, the Trial shall be at such Place or Places as the Congress may by Law have directed.

Section 3. Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two Witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court.

The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment of Treason, but no Attainder of Treason shall work Corruption of Blood, or Forfeiture except during the Life of the Person attainted.

ARTICLE FOUR

Section 1. Full Faith and Credit shall be given in each State to the public Acts, Records, and judicial Proceedings of every other State. And the Congress may by general Laws prescribe the Manner in which such Acts, Records, and Proceedings shall be proved, and the Effect thereof.

Section 2. The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.

A Person charged in any State with Treason, Felony, or other Crime, who shall flee from Justice, and be found in another State, shall on Demand of the executive Authority of the State from

which he fled, be delivered up, to be removed to the State having Jurisdiction of the Crime.

No person held to Service or Labor in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labor, But shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labor may be due.

Section 3. New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new States shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

Section 4. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government, and shall protect each of them against Invasion; and on Application of the Legislature, or of the Executive (when the Legislature cannot be convened) against domestic Violence.

ARTICLE FIVE

The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress; Provided that no Amendment which may be made prior to the Year one thousand eight hundred and eight shall in any Manner affect the first and fourth Clauses in the ninth Section of the first Article; and that no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of it's equal Suffrage in the Senate.

ARTICLE SIX

All Debts contracted and Engagements entered into, before the Adoption of this Constitution, shall be as valid against the United States under this Constitution, as under the Confederation.

This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made

in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding.

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States

ARTICLE SEVEN

The Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same.

Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of the States present the Seventeenth Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty seven and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twelfth In Witness whereof We have hereunto subscribed our Names,

Go. WASHINGTON--
Presid. and deputy from Virginia

New Hampshire

John Langdon
Nicholas Gilman

Massachusetts

Nathaniel Gorham
Rufus King

Connecticut

Wm. Saml. Johnson
Roger Sherman

New York

Alexander Hamilton

New Jersey

Wil: Livingston

David Brearley
Wm. Paterson
Jona: Dayton

Pennsylvania

B Franklin
Thomas Mifflin
Robt Morris
Geo. Clymer
Thos FitzSimons
Jared Ingersoll
James Wilson
Gouv Morris

Delaware

Geo: Read
Gunning Bedford jun
John Dickinson
Richard Bassett
Jaco: Broom

Maryland

James Mchenry
Dan of St Thos. Jenifer
Danl Carroll

Virginia

John Blair--
James Madison Jr.

North Carolina

Wm. Blount
Rich'd Dobbs Spaight
Hu Williamson

South Carolina

J. Rutledge
Charles Cotesworth Pinckney
Charles Pinckney
Pierce Butler

Georgia

William Few
Abr Baldwin

Attest:
William Jackson, Secretary

THE UNITED STATES BILL OF RIGHTS
The Project Gutenberg Etext of *The U. S. Bill of Rights*
The Ten Original Amendments to the Constitution of the United States
Passed by Congress September 25, 1789
Ratified December 15, 1791

I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,
or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,
or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble,
and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

II

A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State,
the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

III
No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house,
without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war,
but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

IV

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers,
and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated,
and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath
or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched,
and the persons or things to be seized.

V

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime,
unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising
in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service
in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for
the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb;
nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself,
nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law;
nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

VI

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a
speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district
wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have
been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature
and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him;
to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor,
and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

VII

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed
twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved,
and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any court
of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

VIII

Excessive bail shall not be required nor excessive fines imposed,
nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

IX

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights,
shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

X

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution,
nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively,
or to the people.

MONTICELLO, March 24th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,--I have received from you two several favors, on the subject of the designs against the territorial rights of Virginia.[105] I never before could comprehend on what principle our rights to the western country could be denied, which would not, at the same time, subvert the right of all the States to the whole of their territory. What objections may be founded on the charter of New York, I cannot say, having never seen that charter, nor been able to get a copy of it in this country. I had thought to have seized the first leisure on my return from the last Assembly, to have considered and stated our rights, and to have communicated to our delegates, or perhaps to the public, so much as I could trace, and expected to have derived some assistance from ancient MSS., which I have been able to collect. These, with my other papers and books, however, had been removed to Augusta to be out of danger from the enemy, and have not yet been brought back. The ground on which I now find the question to be bottomed is so unknown to me that it is out of my power to say anything on the subject. Should it be practicable for me to procure a copy of the charter of New York, I shall probably think on it, and would cheerfully communicate to you whatever could occur to me worth your notice. But this will probably be much too late to be of any service before Congress, who doubtless will decide, ere long, on the subject. I sincerely wish their decision may tend to the preservation of peace. If I am not totally deceived in the determination of this country, the decision of Congress, if unfavorable, will not close the question. I suppose some people on the western waters, who are ambitious to be Governors, &c., will urge a separation by authority of Congress. But the bulk of the people westward are already thrown into great ferment by the report of what is proposed, to which I think they will not submit. This separation is unacceptable to us in form only, and not in substance. On the contrary, I may safely say it is desired by the eastern part of our country whenever their western brethren shall think themselves able to stand alone. In the meantime, on the petition of the western counties, a plan is digesting for rendering their access to government more easy. I trouble you with the enclosed to Mons. Marbois. I had the pleasure of hearing that your father and family were all well yesterday, by your brother, who is about to study the law in my neighborhood. I shall always be glad to hear from you, and, if it be possible for me, retired from public business, to find anything worth your notice, I shall communicate it with great pleasure.

I am with sincere esteem, dear Sir, your friend and servant.

JAMES MONROE TO THOMAS JEFFERSON.

RICHMOND, 11th of May, 1782.

DEAR SIR,--As I so lately wrote you by Mr. Short, and have since daily expected to see you here, I did not propose writing to you till after I should have that pleasure; but as I begin to fear you will not abate that firmness and decision which you have frequently shown in the service of your country, even upon this occasion, and as I have had an opportunity since I last wrote of being better informed of the sentiments of those whom I know you put the greatest value on, I think it my duty to make you acquainted therewith. It is publicly said here, that the people of your country informed you that they had frequently elected you in times of less difficulty and danger than the present to please you; but that now they had called you forth into public office to serve themselves. This is a language which has been often used in my presence; and you will readily conceive that, as it furnishes those who argue on the fundamental maxims of a Republican government with ample field for declamation, the conclusion has always been, that you should not decline the service of your country. The present is generally conceived to be an important era, which, of course, makes your attendance particularly necessary. And as I have taken the liberty to give you the public opinion and desire upon this occasion, and as I am warmly interested in whatever concerns the public interest or has relation to you, it will be necessary to add, it is earnestly the desire of, dear Sir,

Your sincere friend and obedient servant.

TO COLONEL JAMES MONROE.

MONTICELLO, May 20th, 1782.

DEAR SIR,--I have been gratified with your two favors of the 6th and 11th inst. It gives me pleasure that your county has been wise enough to enlist your talent into their service. I am much obliged by the kind wishes you express of seeing me also in Richmond, and am always mortified when anything is expected from me which I cannot fulfill, and more especially if it relate to the public service. Before I ventured to declare to my countrymen my determination to retire from public employment, I examined well my heart to know whether it were thoroughly cured of every principle of political ambition, whether no lurking particle remained which might leave me uneasy, when reduced within the limits of mere private life. I became satisfied that every fibre of that passion was thoroughly eradicated. I examined also, in other views, my right to withdraw. I considered that I had been thirteen years engaged in public service--that, during that time, I had so totally abandoned all attention to my private affairs as to permit them

to run into great disorder and ruin--that I had now a family advanced to years which require my attention and instruction--that, to these, was added the hopeful offspring of a deceased friend, whose memory must be forever dear to me, and who have no other reliance for being rendered useful to themselves or their country--that by a constant sacrifice of time, labor, parental and friendly duties, I had, so far from gaining the affection of my countrymen, which was the only reward I ever asked or could have felt, even lost the small estimation I had before possessed.

That, however I might have comforted myself under the disapprobation of the well-meaning but uninformed people, yet, that of their representatives was a shock on which I had not calculated. That this, indeed, had been followed by an exculpatory declaration. But, in the meantime, I had been suspected in the eyes of the world, without the least hint then or afterwards being made public, which might restrain them from supposing that I stood arraigned for treason of the heart, and not merely weakness of the mind; and I felt that these injuries, for such they have been since acknowledged, had inflicted a wound on my spirit which will only be cured by the all-healing grave. If reason and inclination unite in justifying my retirement, the laws of my country are equally in favor of it. Whether the State may command the political services of all its members to an indefinite extent, or, if these be among the rights never wholly ceded to the public power, is a question which I do not find expressly decided in England. Obiter dictums on the subject I have indeed met with, but the complexion of the times in which these have dropped would generally answer them. Besides that, this species of authority is not acknowledged in our possession.

In this country, however, since the present government has been established, the point has been settled by uniform, pointed and multiplied precedents. Offices of every kind, and given by every power, have been daily and hourly declined and resigned from the Declaration of Independence to this moment. The General Assembly has accepted these without discrimination of office, and without ever questioning them in point of right. If the difference between the office of a delegate and any other could ever have been supposed, yet in the case of Mr. Thompson Mason, who declined the office of delegate, and was permitted so to do by the House, that supposition has been proved to be groundless. But, indeed, no such distinction of offices can be admitted. Reason, and the opinions of the lawyers, putting all on a footing as to this question, and so giving to the delegate the aid of all the precedents of the refusal of other offices. The law then does not warrant the assumption of such a power by the State over its members. For if it does, where is that law? nor yet does reason. For though I will admit that this does subject every individual, if called on, to an equal tour of political duty, yet it can never go so far as to submit to it his whole existence. If we are made in some degree for others, yet, in a greater, are we made for ourselves. It were

contrary to feeling, and indeed ridiculous to suppose that a man had less rights in himself than one of his neighbors, or indeed all of them put together. This would be slavery, and not that liberty which the bill of rights has made inviolable, and for the preservation of which our government has been charged. Nothing could so completely divest us of that liberty as the establishment of the opinion, that the State has a perpetual right to the services of all its members. This, to men of certain ways of thinking, would be to annihilate the blessings of existence, and to contradict the Giver of life, who gave it for happiness and not for wretchedness. And certainly, to such it were better that they had never been born. However, with these, I may think public service and private misery inseparably linked together, I have not the vanity to count myself among those whom the State would think worth oppressing with perpetual service. I have received a sufficient memento to the contrary. I am persuaded that, having hitherto dedicated to them the whole of the active and useful part of my life, I shall be permitted to pass the rest in mental quiet. I hope, too, that I did not mistake modes any more than the matter of right when I preferred a simple act of renunciation, to the taking sanctuary under those disqualifications (provided by the law for other purposes indeed but) affording asylum also for rest to the wearied. I dare say you did not expect by the few words you dropped on the right of renunciation to expose yourself to the fatigue of so long a letter, but I wished you to see that, if I had done wrong, I had been betrayed by a semblance of right at least. I take the liberty of enclosing to you a letter for General Chattellux, for which you will readily find means of conveyance. But I mean to give you more trouble with the one to Pelham, who lives in the neighborhood of Manchester, and to ask the favor of you to send it by your servant--express--which I am in hopes may be done without absenting him from your person, but during those hours in which you will be engaged in the house. I am anxious that it should be received immediately. * * * * * * It will give me great pleasure to see you here whenever you can favor us with your company. You will find me still busy, but in lighter occupations. But in these and all others you will find me to retain a due sense of your friendship, and to be, with sincere esteem, dear Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant.

THE MERRIMAC AND THE MONITOR
_Told by H. Ashton Ramsay, Major C.S.A., Chief Engineer of the "Merrimac"_
Project Gutenberg's *The Monitor and the Merrimac*, by J. L. Worden et al.

The _Merrimac_ was built in 1856 as a full-rigged war-frigate, of thirty-one hundred tons' burden, with auxiliary steam power to be used only in case of head winds. She was a hybrid from her birth, marking the transition from sails to steam as well as from wooden ships to ironclads.

I became her second assistant engineer in Panama Bay in 1859, cruising in her around the Horn and back to Norfolk. Her chief engineer was Alban C. Stimers. Little did we dream that he was to be the right-hand man of Ericsson in the construction of the _Monitor_, while I was to hold a similar post in the conversion of our own ship into an ironclad, or that, in less than a year and a half, we would be seeking to destroy each other, he as chief engineer of the _Monitor_ and I in the corresponding position on the _Merrimac_.

In the harbor of Rio on our return voyage we met the _Congress_, and as we sailed away after coaling she fired a friendly salute and cheered us, and we responded with a will. When the two ships next met it was in one of the deadliest combats of naval history.

The machinery of the _Merrimac_ was condemned, and she went out of commission on our return. She was still at Norfolk when the war broke out, and was set on fire by the Federals when Norfolk was evacuated. Some of the workmen in the navy-yard scuttled and sank her, thus putting out the flames. When she was raised by the Confederates she was nothing but a burned and blackened hulk.

Her charred upper works were cut away, and in the center a casement shield one hundred and eighty feet long was built of pitch-pine and oak, two feet thick. This was covered with iron plates, one to two inches thick and eight inches wide, bolted over each other and through and through the woodwork, giving a protective armor four inches in thickness. The shield sloped at an angle of about thirty-six degrees, and was covered with an iron grating that served as an upper deck. For fifty feet forward and aft her decks were submerged below the water, and the prow was shod with an iron beak to receive the impact when ramming.

Even naval officers were skeptical as to the result. The plates were rolled at the Tredegar mills at Richmond, and arrived so slowly that we were nearly a year in finishing her. We could have rolled them at Norfolk and built four _Merrimacs_ in that time, had the South understood the importance of a navy at the outbreak of the war.

I remember that my old friend and comrade, Captain Charles MacIntosh, while awaiting orders, used to come over and stand on the granite curbing of the dock to watch the work as it crawled along.

"Good-by, Ramsay," he said, sadly, on the eve of starting to command a ram at New Orleans. "I shall never see you again. She will prove your coffin." A short time afterward the poor fellow had both legs shot from under him and died almost immediately.

Rifled guns were just coming into use, and Lieutenant Brooke, who designed the _Merrimac_, considered the question of having some of her guns rifled. How to procure such cannon was not easily discovered, as we had no foundries in the South. There were many cast-iron cannon that had fallen into our hands at Norfolk, and he conceived the idea of turning some of this ordnance into rifles. In order to enable them to stand the additional bursting strain we forged wrought-iron bands and shrank them over the chambers, and we devised a special tool for rifling the bore of the guns. They gave effective service.

Many details remained uncompleted when we were at last floated out of dry-dock, but there was great pressure for us to make some demonstration that might serve to check McClellan in his advance up the Peninsula.

The ship was still full of workmen hurrying her to completion when Commodore Franklin Buchanan arrived from Richmond one March morning and ordered every one out of the ship, except her crew of three hundred and fifty men which had been hastily drilled on shore in the management of the big guns, and directed Executive Officer Jones to prepare to sail at once.

At that time nothing was known of our destination. All we knew was that we were off at last. Buchanan sent for me. The veteran sailor, the beau ideal of a naval officer of the old school, with his tall form, harsh features, and clear, piercing eyes, was pacing the deck with a stride I found it difficult to match, although he was then over sixty and I but twenty-four.

"Ramsay," he asked, "what would happen to your engines and boilers if there should be a collision?"

"They are braced tight," I assured him. "Though the boilers stand fourteen feet, they are so securely fastened that no collision could budge them."

"I am going to ram the _Cumberland_," said my commander. "I'm told she has the new rifled guns, the only ones in their whole fleet we have cause to fear. The moment we are in the Roads I'm going to make right for her and ram her. How about your engines? They were in bad shape in the old ship, I understand. Can we rely on them? Should they be tested

by a trial trip?"

"She will have to travel some ten miles down the river before we get to the Roads," I said. "If any trouble develops I'll report it. I think that will be sufficient trial trip."

I watched the machinery carefully as we sped down the Elizabeth River, and soon satisfied myself that all was well. Then I went on deck.

"How fast is she going do you think?" I asked one of the pilots.

"Eight or nine knots an hour," he replied, making a rapid calculation from objects ashore. The _Merrimac_ as an ironclad was faster under steam than she had ever been before with her top hamper of masts and sails.

I presented myself to the commodore. "The machinery is all right, sir," I assured him.

Across the river at Newport News gleamed the batteries and white tents of the Federal camp and the vessels of the fleet blockading the mouth of the James, chief among them the _Congress_ and the _Cumberland_, tall and stately, with every line and spar clearly defined against the blue March sky, their decks and ports bristling with guns, while the rigging of the _Cumberland_ was gay with the red, white, and blue of sailors' garments hung out to dry.

As we rounded into view the white-winged sailing craft that sprinkled the bay and long lines of tugs and small boats scurried to the far shore like chickens on the approach of a hovering hawk. They had seen our black hulk which looked like the roof of a barn afloat. Suddenly huge volumes of smoke began to pour from the funnels of the frigates _Minnesota_ and _Roanoke_ at Old Point. They had seen us, too, and were getting up steam. Bright-colored signal flags were run up and down the masts of all the ships of the Federal fleet. The _Congress_ shook out her topsails. Down came the clothes-line on the _Cumberland_, and boats were lowered and dropped astern.

Our crew was summoned to the gun-deck, and Buchanan addressed us: "Sailors, in a few minutes you will have the long-looked-for opportunity of showing your devotion to our cause. Remember that you are about to strike for your country and your homes. The Confederacy expects every man to do his duty. Beat to quarters." Every terse, burning word is engraved on my memory, though fifty years have passed since they were spoken.

Just as he had finished, the mess caterer touched my elbow and whispered: "Better get your lunch now, Mr. Ramsay. It will be your last chance. The galley-fires must be put out when the magazines are opened."

On my way I saw Assistant-Surgeon Garnett at a table laying out lint and surgical implements. I had no appetite, and merely tasted some cold tongue and a cup of coffee. Passing along the gun-deck, I saw the pale and determined countenances of the guns' crews, as they stood motionless at their posts, with set lips unsmiling, contrasting with the careless expression of sailors when practised at "fighting quarters" on a man-of-war. This was the real thing.

As we approached the Federal ships we were met by a veritable storm of shells which must have sunk any ship then afloat--except the _Merrimac_. They struck our sloping sides, were deflected upward to burst harmlessly in the air, or rolled down and fell hissing into the water, dashing the spray up into our ports.

As we drew nearer the _Cumberland_, above the roar of battle rang the voice of Buchanan, "Do you surrender?"

"Never!" retorted the gallant Morris.

The crux of what followed was down in the engine-room. Two gongs, the signal to stop, were quickly followed by three, the signal to reverse. There was an ominous pause, then a crash, shaking us all off our feet. The engines labored. The vessel was shaken in every fiber. Our bow was visibly depressed. We seemed to be bearing down with a weight on our prow. Thud, thud, thud, came the rain of shot on our shield from the double-decked battery of the _Congress_. There was a terrible crash in the fire-room. For a moment we thought one of the boilers had burst. No, it was the explosion of a shell in our stack. Was any one hit? No, thank God! The firemen had been warned to keep away from the up-take, so the fragments of shell fell harmlessly on the iron floor-plates.

We had rushed on the doomed ship, relentless as fate, crashing through her barricade of heavy spars and torpedo fenders, striking her below her starboard fore-chains, and crushing far into her. For a moment the whole weight of her hung on our prow and threatened to carry us down with her, the return wave of the collision curling up into our bow port.

The _Cumberland_ began to sink slowly, bow first, but continued to fight desperately for the forty minutes that elapsed after her doom was sealed, while we were engaged with both the _Cumberland_ and the _Congress_, being right between them.

We had left our cast-iron beak in the side of the _Cumberland_. Like the wasp, we could sting but once, leaving it in the wound.

Our smoke-stack was riddled, our flag was shot down several times, and was finally secured to a rent in the stack. On our gun-deck the men were fighting like demons. There was no thought or time for the wounded and

dying as they tugged away at their guns, training and sighting their pieces while the orders rang out, "Sponge, load, fire!"

"The muzzle of our gun has been shot away," cried one of the gunners.

"No matter, keep on loading and firing--do the best you can with it," replied Lieutenant Jones.

"Keep away from the side ports, don't lean against the shield, look out for the sharpshooters," rang the warnings. Some of our men who failed to heed them and leaned against the shield were stunned and carried below, bleeding at the ears. All were full of courage and worked with a will; they were so begrimed with powder that they looked like negroes.

"Pass along the cartridges."

"More powder."

"A shell for number six."

"A wet wad for the hot-shot gun."

"Put out that pipe and don't light it again on peril of your life."

Such were the directions and commands, issued like clockwork amid the confusion of battle. Our executive officer seemed to be in a dozen places at once.

This gives some faint notion of the scene passing behind our grim iron casement, which to the beholders without seemed a machine of destruction. Human hearts were beating and bleeding there. Human lives were being sacrificed. Pain, death, wounds, glory--that was the sum of it.

On the doomed ship _Cumberland_ the battle raged with equal fury. The sanded deck was red and slippery with blood. Delirium seized the crew. They stripped to their trousers, kicked off their shoes, tied handkerchiefs about their heads, and fought and cheered as their ship sank beneath their feet. Then the order came, "All save who can." There was a scramble for the spar-deck and a rush overboard. The ship listed. The after pivot-gun broke loose and rushed down the decline like a furious animal, rolling over a man as it bounded overboard, leaving a mass of mangled flesh on deck.

We now turned to the _Congress_, which had tried to escape but had grounded, and the battle raged once more, broadside upon broadside, delivered at close range, the _Merrimac_ working closer all the time with her bow pointed as if to ram the _Congress_. A shell from Lieutenant Wood's gun sped through their line of powder-passers, not

only cutting down the men, but exploding the powder buckets in their hands, spreading death and destruction and setting fire to the ship.

At last came the order, "Cease firing."

"The _Congress_ has surrendered," some one cried. "Look out of the port. See, she has run up white flags. The officers are waving their handkerchiefs."

At this several of the officers started to leave their posts and rush on deck, but Lieutenant Jones in his stentorian voice sang out: "Stand by your guns, and, lieutenants, be ready to resume firing at the word. See that your guns are well supplied with ammunition during the lull. Dr. Garnett, see how those poor fellows yonder are coming on. Mr. Littlepage, tell Paymaster Semple to have a care of the berth-deck and use every precaution against fire. Mr. Hasker, call away the cutter's crew and have them in readiness. Mr. Lindsay [to the carpenter], sound the well, examine the forehold, and report if you find anything wrong." Such was Catesby Ap. R. Jones, the executive officer of the _Merrimac_.

When it was fully evident that there was to be a suspension of hostilities, and these details had all been attended to, several of the officers went to stand beside Buchanan on the upper grating.

The whole scene was changed. A pall of black smoke hung about the ships and obscured the clean-cut outlines of the shore. Down the river were the three frigates _St. Lawrence_, _Roanoke_, and _Minnesota_, also enveloped in the clouds of battle that now and then reflected the crimson lightnings of the god of war. The masts of the _Cumberland_ were protruding above the water. The _Congress_ presented a terrible scene of carnage.

The gunboats _Beaufort_ and _Raleigh_ were signaled to take off the wounded and fire the ship. They were driven away by sharpshooters on shore, who suddenly turned their fire on us, notwithstanding the white flag of the _Congress_. Buchanan fell, severely wounded in the groin.

As he was being carried below he said to Executive Officer Jones: "Plug hot shot into her and don't leave her until she's afire. They must look after their own wounded, since they won't let us"--a characteristic command when it is remembered that his own brother, McKean Buchanan, was paymaster of the _Congress_ and might have been numbered among the wounded.

We had kept two furnaces for the purpose of heating shot. They were rolled into the flames on a grating, rolled out into iron buckets, hoisted to the gun-deck, and rolled into the guns, which had been prepared with wads of wet hemp. Then the gun would be touched off quickly and the shot sent on its errand of destruction.

Leaving the _Congress_ wrapped in sheets of flame, we made for the three other frigates. The _St. Lawrence_ and _Roanoke_ had run aground, but were pulled off by tugs and made their escape. The _Minnesota_ was not so fortunate, but we drew twenty-three feet of water and could not get near enough to destroy her, while our guns could not be elevated owing to the narrow embrasures, and their range was only a mile; so we made for our moorings at Sewall's Point.

All the evening we stood on deck watching the brilliant display of the burning ship. Every part of her was on fire at the same time, the red-tongued flames running up shrouds, masts, and stays, and extending out to the yard-arms. She stood in bold relief against the black background, lighting up the Roads and reflecting her lurid lights on the bosom of the now placid and hushed waters. Every now and then the flames would reach one of the loaded cannon and a shell would hiss at random through the darkness. About midnight came the grand finale. The magazines exploded, shooting up a huge column of firebrands hundreds of feet in the air, and then the burning hulk burst asunder and melted into the waters, while the calm night spread her sable mantle over Hampton Roads.

The _Monitor_ arrived during the evening and anchored under the stern of the _Minnesota_, her lighter draught enabling her to do so without danger. To us the ensuing engagement was in the nature of a surprise. If we had known we were to meet her we would have at least been supplied with solid shot for our rifled guns. We might even have thought best to wait until our iron beak, lost in the side of the _Cumberland_, could be replaced. Buchanan was incapacitated by his wound, and the command devolved upon Lieutenant Jones.

We left our anchorage shortly before eight o'clock next morning and steamed across and up stream toward the _Minnesota_, thinking to make short work of her and soon return with her colors trailing under ours. We approached her slowly, feeling our way cautiously along the edge of the channel, when suddenly, to our astonishment, a black object that looked like the historic description, "a barrel-head afloat with a cheese-box on top of it," moved slowly out from under the _Minnesota_ and boldly confronted us. It must be confessed that both ships were queer-looking craft, as grotesque to the eyes of the men of '62 as they would appear to those of the present generation.

And now the great fight was on, a fight the like of which the world had never seen. With the battle of yesterday old methods had passed away, and with them the experience of a thousand years "of battle and of breeze" was brought to naught.

We hovered about each other in spirals, gradually contracting the circuits until we were within point-blank range, but our shell glanced

from the _Monitor's_ turret just as hers did from our sloping sides. For two hours the cannonade continued without perceptible damage to either of the combatants.

On our gun-deck all was bustle, smoke, grimy figures, and stern commands, while down in the engine and boiler rooms the sixteen furnaces were belching out fire and smoke, and the firemen standing in front of them, like so many gladiators, tugged away with devil's-claw and slice-bar, inducing by their exertions more and more intense combustion and heat. The noise of the cracking, roaring fires, escaping steam, and the loud and labored pulsations of the engines, together with the roar of battle above and the thud and vibration of the huge masses of iron which were hurled against us produced a scene and sound to be compared only with the poet's picture of the lower regions.

And then an accident occurred that threatened our utter destruction. We stuck fast aground on a sand-bar.

Our situation was critical. The _Monitor_ could, at her leisure, come close up to us and yet be out of our reach, owing to our inability to deflect our guns. In she came and began to sound every chink in our armor--every one but that which was actually vulnerable, had she known it.

The coal consumption of the two days' fight had lightened our prow until our unprotected submerged deck was almost awash. The armor on our sides below the water-line had been extended but about three feet, owing to our hasty departure before the work was finished. Lightened as we were, these exposed portions rendered us no longer an ironclad, and the _Monitor_ might have pierced us between wind and water had she depressed her guns.

Fearing that she might discover our vulnerable "heel of Achilles" we had to take all chances. We lashed down the safety valves, heaped quick-burning combustibles into the already raging fires, and brought the boilers to a pressure that would have been unsafe under ordinary circumstances. The propeller churned the mud and water furiously, but the ship did not stir. We piled on oiled cotton waste, splints of wood, anything that would burn faster than coal. It seemed impossible that the boilers could stand the pressure we were crowding upon them. Just as we were beginning to despair there was a perceptible movement, and the _Merrimac_ slowly dragged herself off the shoal by main strength. We were saved.

Before our adversary saw that we were again afloat we made a dash for her, catching her quite unprepared, and tried to ram her, but our commander was dubious about the result of a collision without our iron-shod beak, and gave the signal to reverse the engines long before we reached the _Monitor_. As a result I did not feel the slightest shock

down in the engine-room, though we struck her fairly enough.

The carpenter reported that the effect was to spring a leak forward. Lieutenant Jones sent for me and asked me about it.

"It is impossible we can be making much water," I replied, "for the skin of the vessel is plainly visible in the crank-pits."

A second time he sent for me and asked if we were making any water in the engine-room.

"With the two large Worthington pumps, besides the bilge injections, we could keep her afloat for hours, even with a ten-inch shell in her hull," I assured him, repeating that there was no water in the engine and boiler rooms.

We glided past, leaving the _Monitor_ unscathed, but got between her and the _Minnesota_ and opened fire on the latter. The _Monitor_ gallantly rushed to her rescue, passing so close under our submerged stern that she almost snapped off our propeller. As she was passing, so near that we could have leaped aboard her, Lieutenant Wood trained the stern-gun on her when she was only twenty yards from its muzzle and delivered a rifle-pointed shell which dislodged the iron logs sheltering the _Monitor's_ conning-tower, carrying away the steering-gear and signal apparatus, and blinding Captain Worden. It was a mistake to place the conning-tower so far from the turret and the vitals of the ship. Since that time it has been located over the turret. The _Monitor's_ turret was a death-trap. It was only twenty feet in diameter, and every shot knocked off bolt-heads and sent them flying against the gunners. If one of them barely touched the side of the turret he would be stunned and momentarily paralyzed. Lieutenant Greene had been taken below in a dazed condition and never fully recovered from the effects. One of the port shutters had been jammed, putting a gun out of commission, and there was nothing for the _Monitor_ to do but to retreat and leave the _Minnesota_ to her fate.

Captain Van Brunt, of the latter vessel, thought he was now doomed and was preparing to fire his ship when he saw the _Merrimac_ also withdrawing toward Norfolk.

It was at this juncture that Lieutenant Jones had sent for me and said: "The pilots will not place us nearer to the _Minnesota_, and we cannot afford to run the risk of getting aground again. I'm going to haul off under the guns of Sewall's Point and renew the attack on the rise of the tide. Bank your fires and make any necessary adjustments to the machinery, but be prepared to start up again later in the afternoon."

I went below to comply with his instructions, and later was astonished to hear cheering. Rushing on deck, I found we were passing Craney Island

on our way to Norfolk, and were being cheered by the soldiers of the battery.

Our captain had consulted with some of his lieutenants. He explained afterward that as the _Monitor_ had proved herself so formidable an adversary he had thought best to get a supply of solid shot, have the prow replaced, the port shutters put on, the armor belt extended below water, and the guns whose muzzles had been shot away replaced, and then renew the engagement with every chance of victory. I remember feeling as though a wet blanket had been thrown over me. His reasoning was doubtless good, but it ignored the moral effect of leaving the Roads without forcing the _Minnesota_ to surrender.

As the _Merrimac_ passed up the river, trailing the ensign of the _Congress_ under the stars and bars, she received a tremendous ovation from the crowds that lined the shores, while hundreds of small boats, gay with flags and bunting, converted our course into a triumphal procession.

We went into dry-dock that very afternoon, and in about three weeks were ready to renew the battle upon more advantageous terms, but the _Monitor_, though reinforced by two other ironclads, the _Galena_ and the _Naugatuck_, and every available vessel of the United States navy, was under orders from Washington to refuse our challenge and bottle us up in the Roads. This strategy filled us with rage and dismay, but it proved very effective.

Our new commander, Commodore Josiah Tatnall, was burning to distinguish himself, but he was under orders not to risk the destruction or capture of the _Merrimac_ by leaving the Roads, as General Huger's division at Norfolk would then be at the mercy of the Federal fleet. Week after week was passing and with it his golden opportunity. At last we went to Richmond and pressed a plan for a sortie upon the President. He returned one afternoon and ordered every one aboard. That night we slipped down the Roads and were soon passing Fort Monroe on our way out into the Chesapeake.

Presently our army signal officer began waving his lantern communicating with our distant batteries, and then told the result to Officer Jones, who reported to Tatnall. "We have been ordered to return, sir," he said.

Tatnall was viewing the dim outlines of the fort through his glass and pretended not to hear.

"The order is peremptory," repeated Jones.

Tatnall hesitated. He was of half a mind to disobey. "Old Huger has outwitted me," he muttered. "Do what you please. I leave you in command. I'm going to bed," and he went below in a high dudgeon. Tatnall was a

striking-looking man, standing over six feet, with florid complexion, deep-sunken blue eyes, and a protruding under lip. That he did not have a chance to fight was no fault of his.

Our life on board for the weeks that followed was far from comfortable. We were within sight of the enemy, and at every movement of the opposing fleet it was "clear away for action." Steam was kept up continually. Our cabins were without air ports and no ray of light even penetrated the ward-rooms. There was nowhere to walk but on the upper grating--a modern prison is far more comfortable. Sometimes the sailors waded on the submerged deck, giving rise to the superstition among the darkies that they were the crew of the "debble ship" with power to walk on the water.

Norfolk was now being evacuated and we were covering Huger's retreat. When this was effected we were to receive the signal and to make our own way up the James. Norfolk was in Federal hands, and Huger had disappeared without signaling us, when our pilots informed us that Harrison's Bar, which we must cross, drew only eighteen feet of water. Under their advice, on the night of May 11th we lightened ship by throwing overboard all our coal and ballast, thus raising our unprotected decks above water. At last all was ready--and then we found that the wind which had been blowing down-stream all day had swept the water off the bar. When morning dawned the Federal fleet must discover our defenseless condition, and defeat and capture were certain, for we were now no longer an ironclad.

It was decided to abandon the vessel and set her on fire. We took the _Merrimac_ to the bight of Craney Island, and about midnight the work of disembarking the crew began. We had but two boats, and it was sunrise before our three hundred and fifty men were all ashore. Cotton waste and trains of powder were strewn about the deck, and Executive Officer Jones, who was the last to leave the ship, applied the slow match. Then we marched silently through the woods to join Huger, fifteen miles away at Suffolk.

Still unconquered, we hauled down our drooping colors, their laurels all fresh and green, with mingled pride and grief, gave her to the flames, and set the lambent fires roaring about the shotted guns. The slow match, the magazine, and that last, deep, low, sullen, mournful boom told our people, now far away on the march, that their gallant ship was no more.

A rude cabin, in a lone wood, far from any neighbors, was granted to our freed friends, as the only assistance they were now to expect. Bomefree, from this time, found his poor needs hardly supplied, as his new providers were scarce able to administer to their own wants. However, the time drew near when things were to be decidedly worse rather than better; for they had not been together long, before Betty died, and shortly after, Caesar followed her to 'that bourne from whence no traveller returns'-leaving poor James again desolate, and more helpless than ever before; as, this time, there was no kind family in the house, and the Ardinburghs no longer invited him to their homes. Yet, lone, blind and helpless as he was, James for a time lived on. One day, an aged colored woman, named Soan, called at his shanty, and James besought her, in the most moving manner, even with tears, to tarry awhile and wash and mend him up, so that he might once more be decent and comfortable; for he was suffering dreadfully with the filth and vermin that had collected upon him.

Soan was herself an emancipated slave, old and weak, with no one to care for her; and she lacked the courage to undertake a job of such seeming magnitude, fearing she might herself get sick, and perish there without assistance; and with great reluctance, and a heart swelling with pity, as she afterwards declared, she felt obliged to leave him in his wretchedness and filth. And shortly after her visit, this faithful slave, this deserted wreck of humanity, was found on his miserable pallet, frozen and stiff in death. The kind angel had come at last, and relieved him of the many miseries that his fellow-man had heaped upon him. Yes, he had died, chilled and starved, with none to speak a kindly word, or do a kindly deed for him, in that last dread of hour of need!

The news of his death reached the ears of John Ardinburgh, a grandson of the old Colonel; and he declared that 'Bomefree, who had ever been a kind and faithful slave, should now have a good funeral.' And now, gentle reader, what think you constituted a good funeral? Answer-some black paint for the coffin, and-a jug of ardent spirits! What a compensation for a life of toil, of patient submission to repeated robberies of the most aggravated kind, and, also, far more than murderous neglect!! Mankind often vainly attempts to atone for unkindness or cruelty to the living, by honoring the same after death; but John Ardinburgh undoubtably meant his pot of paint and jug of whisky should act as an opiate on his slaves, rather than on his own seared conscience.

COMMENCEMENT OF ISABELLA'S TRIALS IN LIFE.
ibid

Having seen the sad end of her parents, so far as it relates to this earthly life, we will return with Isabella to that memorable auction which threatened to separate her father and mother. A slave auction is a terrible affair to its victims, and its incidents and consequences are graven on their hearts as with a pen of burning steel.

At this memorable time, Isabella was struck off, for the sum of one hundred dollars, to one John Nealy, of Ulster County, New York; and she has an impression that in this sale she was connected with a lot of sheep. She was now nine years of age, and her trials in life may be dated from this period. She says, with emphasis, 'Now the war begun. ' She could only talk Dutch-and the Nealys could only talk English. Mr. Nealy could understand Dutch, but Isabel and her mistress could neither of them understand the language of the other-and this, of itself, was a formidable obstacle in the way of a good understanding between them, and for some time was a fruitful source of dissatisfaction to the mistress, and of punishment and suffering to Isabella. She says, 'If they sent me for a frying-pan, not knowing what they meant, perhaps I carried them pot-hooks and trammels. Then, oh! how angry mistress would be with me!' Then she suffered 'terribly-terribly ', with the cold. During the winter her feet were badly frozen, for want of proper covering. They gave her a plenty to eat, and also a plenty of whippings. One Sunday morning, in particular, she was told to go to the barn; on going there, she found her master with a bundle of rods, prepared in the embers, and bound together with cords. When he had tied her hands together before her, he gave her the most cruel whipping she was ever tortured with. He whipped her till the flesh was deeply lacerated, and the blood streamed from her wounds-and the scars remain to the present day, to testify to the fact. 'And now,' she says, 'when I hear 'em tell of whipping women on the bare flesh, it makes my flesh crawl, and my very hair rise on my head! Oh! my God!' she continues, 'what a way is this of treating human beings?' In those hours of her extremity, she did not forget the instructions of her mother, to go to God in all her trials, and every affliction; and she not only remembered, but obeyed: going to him, 'and telling him all-and asking Him if He thought it was right,' and begging him to protect and shield her from her persecutors.

She always asked with an unwavering faith that she should receive just what she pleaded for,-'And now,' she says, 'though it seems curious, I do not remember ever asking for any thing but what I got it. And I

always received it as an answer to my prayers. When I got beaten, I never knew it long enough to go beforehand to pray; and I always thought that if I only had had time to pray to God for help, I should have escaped the beating.' She had no idea God had any knowledge of her thoughts, save what she told him; or heard her prayers, unless they were spoken audibly. And consequently, she could not pray unless she had time and opportunity to go by herself, where she could talk to God without being overheard.

TRIALS CONTINUED.
ibid

When she had been at Mr. Nealy's several months, she began to beg God most earnestly to send her father to her, and as soon as she commenced to pray, she began as confidently to look for his coming, and, ere it was long, to her great joy, he came. She had no opportunity to speak to him of the troubles that weighed so heavily on her spirit, while he remained; but when he left, she followed him to the gate, and unburdened her heart to him, inquiring if he could not do something to get her a new and better place. In this way the slaves often assist each other, by ascertaining who are kind to their slaves, comparatively; and then using their influence to get such an one to hire or buy their friends; and masters, often from policy, as well as from latent humanity, allow those they are about to sell or let, to choose their own places, if the persons they happen to select for masters are considered safe pay. He promised to do all he could, and they parted. But, every day, as long as the snow lasted, (for there was snow on the ground at the time,) she returned to the spot where they separated, and walking in the tracks her father had made in the snow, repeated her prayer that 'God would help her father get her a new and better place.'

A long time had not elapsed, when a fisherman by the name of Scriver appeared at Mr. Nealy's, and inquired of Isabel 'if she would like to go and live with him.' She eagerly answered 'Yes,' and nothing doubting but he was sent in answer to her prayer; and she soon started off with him, walking while he rode; for he had bought her at the suggestion of her father, paying one hundred and five dollars for her. He also lived in Ulster County, but some five or six miles from Mr. Nealy's.

Scriver, besides being a fisherman, kept a tavern for the accommodation of people of his own class-for his was a rude,

uneducated family, exceedingly profane in their language, but, on the whole, an honest, kind and well-disposed people.

They owned a large farm, but left it wholly unimproved; attending mainly to their vocations of fishing and inn-keeping. Isabella declares she can ill describe the kind of life she led with them. It was a wild, out-of-door kind of lief. She was expected to carry fish, to hoe corn, to bring roots and herbs from the woods for beers, go to the Strand for a gallon of molasses or liquor as the case might require, and 'browse around,' as she expresses it. It was a life that suited her well for the time-being as devoid of hardship or terror as it was of improvement; a need which had not yet become a want. Instead of improving at this place, morally, she retrograded, as their example taught her to curse; and it was here that she took her first oath. After living with them for about a year and a half, she was sold to one John J. Dumont, for the sum of seventy pounds. This was in 1810. Mr. Dumont lived in the same county as her former masters, in the town of New Paltz, and she remained with him till a short time previous to her emancipation by the State, in 1828.

BATTLE OF BULL RUN, JULY, 1861
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Complete Prose Works*, by Walt Whitman

All this sort of feeling was destin'd to be arrested and revers'd by a terrible shock--the battle of first Bull Run--certainly, as we now know it, one of the most singular fights on record. (All battles, and their results, are far more matters of accident than is generally thought; but this was throughout a casualty, a chance. Each side supposed it had won, till the last moment. One had, in point of fact, just the same right to be routed as the other. By a fiction, or series of fictions, the national forces at the last moment exploded in a panic and fled from the field.) The defeated troops commenced pouring into Washington over the Long Bridge at daylight on Monday, 22d--day drizzling all through with rain. The Saturday and Sunday of the battle (20th, 21st,) had been parch'd and hot to an extreme--the dust, the grime and smoke, in layers, sweated in, follow'd by other layers again sweated in, absorb'd by those excited souls--their clothes all saturated with the clay-powder filling the air--stirr'd up everywhere on the dry roads and trodden fields by the regiments, swarming wagons, artillery, &c.--all the men with this coating of murk and sweat and rain, now recoiling back, pouring over the Long Bridge--a horrible march of twenty miles, returning to Washington baffed, humiliated, panic-struck. Where are the vaunts, and the proud boasts with which you went forth? Where are your banners, and your bands of music, and your ropes to bring back your prisoners? Well, there isn't a band

playing--and there isn't a flag but clings ashamed and lank to its staff.

The sun rises, but shines not. The men appear, at first sparsely and shame-faced enough, then thicker, in the streets of Washington --appear in Pennsylvania avenue, and on the steps and basement entrances. They come along in disorderly mobs, some in squads, stragglers, companies. Occasionally, a rare regiment, in perfect order, with its officers (some gaps, dead, the true braves,) marching in silence, with lowering faces, stern, weary to sinking, all black and dirty, but every man with his musket, and stepping alive; but these are the exceptions. Sidewalks of Pennsylvania avenue, Fourteenth street, &c., crowded, jamm'd with citizens, darkies, clerks, everybody, lookers-on; women in the windows, curious expressions from faces, as those swarms of dirt-cover'd return'd soldiers there (will they never end?) move by; but nothing said, no comments; (half our lookers-on secesh of the most venomous kind--they say nothing; but the devil snickers in their faces.) During the forenoon Washington gets all over motley with these defeated soldiers--queer-looking objects, strange eyes and faces, drench'd (the steady rain drizzles on all day) and fearfully worn, hungry, haggard, blister'd in the feet. Good people (but not over-many of them either,) hurry up something for their grub. They put wash-kettles on the fire, for soup, for coffee. They set tables on the side-walks--wagon-loads of bread are purchas'd, swiftly cut in stout chunks. Here are two aged ladies, beautiful, the first in the city for culture and charm, they stand with store of eating and drink at an improvis'd table of rough plank, and give food, and have the store replenished from their house every half-hour all that day; and there in the rain they stand, active, silent, white-hair'd, and give food, though the tears stream down their cheeks, almost without intermission, the whole time. Amid the deep excitement, crowds and motion, and desperate eagerness, it seems strange to see many, very many, of the soldiers sleeping--in the midst of all, sleeping sound. They drop down anywhere, on the steps of houses, up close by the basements or fences, on the sidewalk, aside on some vacant lot, and deeply sleep. A poor 17 or 18 year old boy lies there, on the stoop of a grand house; he sleeps so calmly, so profoundly. Some clutch their muskets firmly even in sleep. Some in squads; comrades, brothers, close together--and on them, as they lay, sulkily drips the rain.

As afternoon pass'd, and evening came, the streets, the bar-rooms, knots everywhere, listeners, questioners, terrible yarns, bugaboo, mask'd batteries, our regiment all cut up, &c.--stories and story-tellers, windy, bragging, vain centres of street-crowds. Resolution, manliness, seem to have abandon'd Washington. The principal hotel, Willard's, is full of shoulder-straps--thick, crush'd, creeping with shoulder-straps. (I see them, and must have a word with them. There you are, shoulder-straps!--but where are your

companies? where are your men? Incompetents! never tell me of chances of battle, of getting stray'd, and the like. I think this is your work, this retreat, after all. Sneak, blow, put on airs there in Willard's sumptuous parlors and bar-rooms, or anywhere--no explanation shall save you. Bull Run is your work; had you been half or one-tenth worthy your men, this would never have happen'd.)

Meantime, in Washington, among the great persons and their entourage, a mixture of awful consternation, uncertainty, rage, shame, helplessness, and stupefying disappointment. The worst is not only imminent, but already here. In a few hours--perhaps before the next meal--the secesh generals, with their victorious hordes, will be upon us. The dream of humanity, the vaunted Union we thought so strong, so impregnable--lo! it seems already smash'd like a china plate. One bitter, bitter hour--perhaps proud America will never again know such an hour. She must pack and fly--no time to spare. Those white palaces--the dome-crown'd capitol there on the hill, so stately over the trees--shall they be left--or destroy'd first? For it is certain that the talk among certain of the magnates and officers and clerks and officials everywhere, for twenty-four hours in and around Washington after Bull Run, was loud and undisguised for yielding out and out, and substituting the southern rule, and Lincoln promptly abdicating and departing. If the secesh officers and forces had immediately follow'd, and by a bold Napoleonic movement had enter'd Washington the first day, (or even the second,) they could have had things their own way, and a powerful faction north to back them. One of our returning colonels express'd in public that night, amid a swarm of officers and gentlemen in a crowded room, the opinion that it was useless to fight, that the southerners had made their title clear, and that the best course for the national government to pursue was to desist from any further attempt at stopping them, and admit them again to the lead, on the best terms they were willing to grant. Not a voice was rais'd against this judgment, amid that large crowd of officers and gentlemen. (The fact is, the hour was one of the three or four of those crises we had then and afterward, during the fluctuations of four years, when human eyes appear'd at least just as likely to see the last breath of the Union as to see it continue.)

THE NEGRO IN THE REGULAR ARMY by Oswald Garrison Villard
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When the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment stormed Fort Wagner July 18, 1863, only to be driven back with the loss of its colonel, Robert Gould Shaw, and many of its rank and file, it established for all time the fact that the colored soldier would fight and fight well. This had already been demonstrated in Louisiana by colored regiments under the

command of General Godfrey Weitzel in the attack upon Port Hudson on May 27 of the same year. On that occasion regiments composed for the greater part of raw recruits, plantation hands with centuries of servitude under the lash behind them, stormed trenches and dashed upon cold steel in the hands of their former masters and oppressors. After that there was no more talk in the portion of the country of the "natural cowardice" of the negro. But the heroic qualities of Colonel Shaw, his social prominence and that of his officers, and the comparative nearness of their battlefield to the North, attracted greater and more lasting attention to the daring and bravery of their exploit, until it finally became fixed in many minds as the first real baptism of fire of colored American soldiers.

After Wagner the recruiting of colored regiments, originally opposed by both North and South, went on apace, particularly under the Federal government, which organized no less than one hundred and fifty-four, designated as "United States Colored Troops." Colonel Shaw's raising of a colored regiment aroused quite as much comment in the North because of the race prejudice it defied, as because of the novelty of the new organization. General Weitzel tendered his resignation the instant General B. F. Butler assigned black soldiers to his brigade, and was with difficulty induced to serve on. His change of mind was a wise one, and not only because these colored soldiers covered him with glory at Port Hudson. It was his good fortune to be the central figure in one of the dramatic incidents of a war that must ever rank among the most thrilling and tragic the world has seen. The black cavalrymen who rode into Richmond, the first of the Northern troops to enter the Southern capital, went in waving their sabres and crying to the negroes on the sidewalks, "We have come to set you free!" They were from the division of Godfrey Weitzel, and American history has no more stirring moment.

In the South, notwithstanding the raising in 1861 of a colored Confederate regiment by Governor Moore of Louisiana (a magnificent body of educated colored men which afterwards became the First Louisiana National Guards of General Weitzel's brigade and the first colored regiment in the Federal Army), the feeling against negro troops was insurmountable until the last days of the struggle. Then no straw could be overlooked. When, in December, 1863, Major-General Patrick R. Cleburne, who commanded a division of Hardee's Corps of the Confederate Army of the Tennessee, sent in a paper in which the employment of the slaves as soldiers of the South was vigorously advocated, Jefferson Davis indorsed it with the statement, "I deem it inexpedient at this time to give publicity to this paper, and request that it be suppressed." General Cleburne urged that "freedom within a reasonable time" be granted to every slave remaining true to the Confederacy, and was moved to this action by the valor of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, saying, "If they [the negroes] can be made to face and fight bravely against their former masters, how much more probable is it that with the allurement of a higher reward, and led by those masters, they would

submit to discipline and face dangers?"

With the ending of the civil war the regular army of the United States was reorganized upon a peace footing by an act of Congress dated July 28, 1866. In just recognition of the bravery of the colored volunteers six regiments, the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and the Thirty-eighth, Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, and Forth-first Infantry, were designated as colored regiments. When the army was again reduced in 1869, the Thirty-eighth and Forty-first became the Twenty-fourth Infantry, and the Thirty-ninth and Fortieth became the Twenty-fifth. This left four colored regiments in the regular army as it was constituted from 1870 until 1901. There has never been a colored artillery organization in the regular service.

To these new regiments came a motley mixture of veterans of volunteer organizations, newly released slaves, and some freedmen of several years' standing but without military experience. They were eager to learn, and soon showed the same traits which distinguish the black regiments to-day,--loyalty to their officers and to their colors, sobriety and courage, and a notable pride in the efficiency of their corps. But if ever officers had to "father and mother" their soldiers they were the company officers of these regiments. The captains in particular had to be bankers, secretaries, advisers, and judges for their men. As Lieutenant Grote Hutcheson has stated it, "The men knew nothing, and the non-commissioned officers but little more. From the very circumstances of their preceding life it could not be otherwise. They had no independence, no self-reliance, not a thought except for the present, and were filled with superstition." Yet the officers were determined to prove the wisdom of the experiment. To do this they were forced to give their own attention to the minutest details of military administration, and to act as non-commissioned officers. The total lack of education among the men necessitated an enormous amount of writing by the officers. In the Ninth Cavalry only one man was found able to write well enough to be sergeant-major, and not for several years was it possible to obtain troop clerks. When the Tenth Cavalry was being recruited an officer was sent to Philadelphia with the express purpose of picking up educated colored men for the non-commissioned positions. Difficult as the tasks of the officers thus were, most of them felt well repaid for their unusual labors by the affectionate regard in which they were held by their soldiers, and by the never-failing good humor with which the latter went about their duties.

As the years passed the character of the colored soldiers naturally changed. In place of the war veterans, and of the men whose chains of servitude had just been struck off, came young men from the North and East with more education and more self-reliance. They depended less upon their officers, both in the barracks and in the field, yet they reverenced and cared for them as much as did their predecessors. Their greatest faults then as now were gambling and quarreling. On the other

hand, the negro regiments speedily became favorably known because of greater sobriety and of fewer desertions than among the white soldiers. It was the Ninth Cavalry which a few years ago astonished the army by reporting not a single desertion in twelve months, an unheard-of and perhaps undreamed-of record. In all that goes to make a good soldier, in drill, fidelity, and smartness, the negro regular from the first took front rank.

Nor was there ever any lack of the fighting quality which had gratified the nation at Fort Wagner, or at Fort Blakely, Ala., where the Seventy-third Colored Infantry, under Colonel Henry C. Merriam, stormed the enemy's works, in advance of orders, in one of the last actions of the war. It soon fell to the lot of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry to prove that the negroes could do as well under fire in the Indian wars as they had when fighting for the freedom of their race. While the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry had merely garrison work to do, the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry scouted for years against hostile Indians in Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas, always acquitting themselves honorably. In September, 1868, a little over two years after their organization, three troops of the Ninth Cavalry did well in an action against Indians at Horsehead Hills, Texas. When General George A. Forsyth and his detachment of fifty scouts were surrounded and "corralled" by seven hundred Indians on an island in the Republican River, it was the troop of Captain Louis H. Carpenter, of the Tenth Cavalry, which first came to their rescue. Similarly when Major T. T. Thornburg's command was nearly wiped out by Utes in 1879, it was Captain F. S. Dodge's Troop D of the Ninth which succeeded in reaching it in time, losing all its horses in so doing. This regiment alone took part in sixty Indian fights between 1868 and 1890, during which time it lost three officers and twenty-seven men killed, and had three officers and thirty-four men wounded. The Tenth Cavalry's casualties were also heavy during this same period, and it fought for many years over a most difficult country in New Mexico and Arizona, taking a conspicuous part in running to earth Geronimo's and Victoria's bands of Apaches.

On one of these campaigns Lieutenant Powhatan H. Clarke gave effective proof of the affection which the officers of colored regiments have for their men. In the fight in the Pineto Mountains with a portion of Geronimo's forces this young Southerner risked his life to save a colored sergeant who had fallen wounded in an open space where both he and his rescuer were easy marks for the Apaches. For this gallant act Lieutenant Clarke rightly received a medal of honor. The Twenty-fourth Infantry, on the other hand, has contributed a striking instance of the devotion of colored soldiers to their officers. When Major Joseph W. Wham, paymaster, was attacked by robbers on May 11, 1889, his colored escort fought with such gallantry that every one of the soldiers was awarded a medal of honor or a certificate of merit. Some of them stood their ground although badly wounded, notably Sergeant Benjamin Brown, who continued to fight and to encourage his men until shot through both

arms. In a fight against Apaches in the Cuchilo Negro Mountains of New Mexico on August 16, 1881, Moses Williams, First Sergeant of Troop I, Ninth Cavalry, displayed such gallantry that he was given a medal of honor by common consent. When the only officer with the detachment, Lieutenant Gustavus Valois, had his horse shot under him, and was cut off from his men, Sergeant Williams promptly rallied the detachment, and conducted the right flank in a running fight for several hours with such coolness, bravery, and unflinching devotion to duty that he undoubtedly saved the lives of at least three comrades. His action in standing by and rescuing Lieutenant Valois was the more noteworthy because he and his men were subjected, in an exposed position, to a heavy fire from a large number of Indians. For splendid gallantry against Indians, while serving as sergeant of Troop K, Ninth Cavalry, on May 14, 1880, and August 12, 1881, George Jordan was also given a medal of honor. Five of the medal of honor men now in the service are colored soldiers, while fifteen others have "certificates of merit" also awarded for conspicuous deeds of bravery.

It was not until the battle of Santiago, however, that the bulk of the American people realized that the standing army comprised regiments composed wholly of black men. Up to that time only one company of colored soldiers had served at a post east of the Mississippi. Even Major, later Brigadier-General, Guy V. Henry's gallop to the rescue of the Seventh Cavalry on December 30, 1890, with four troops of the Ninth Cavalry, attracted but little attention. This feat was the more remarkable because Major Henry's command had just completed a march of more than one hundred miles in twenty-four hours. But in the battle at Santiago, the four colored regiments won praise from all sides, particularly for their advance upon Kettle Hill, in which the Rough Riders also figured. From the very beginning of the movement of the army after its landing, the negro troops were in the front of the fighting, and contributed largely to the successful result. Although they suffered heavy losses, especially in officers, the men fought with the same gallantry they had displayed on the plains, as is attested by the honors awarded. In every company there were instances of personal gallantry. The first sergeants especially lived up to the responsibilities placed upon them. The color sergeant of the Tenth Cavalry, Adam Houston, bore to the front not only his own flags, but those of the Third Cavalry when the latter's color sergeant was shot down. In several emergencies where troops or companies lost their white officers, the senior sergeants took command and handled their men in a faultless manner, notably in the Tenth Cavalry.

Indeed, the conduct of these men has done much to dispel the old belief that colored soldiers will fight only when they have efficient white officers. This may well have been true at one period of the civil war when the colored race as a whole had never even had the responsibilities attaching to free men. It is growing less and less true as time passes and better educated men enter the ranks. In recognition of their

achievements at Santiago a number of these black non-commissioned officers were made commissioned officers in several of the so-called "immune" regiments of United States Volunteers raised in July, 1898. None of these organizations were in service long enough to become really efficient, and a few were never properly disciplined. Nevertheless, a majority of the officers promoted from the colored regulars bore themselves well under exceedingly trying circumstances. Some of them, and a number of regular sergeants and corporals who had succeeded to their former places, were made lieutenants and captains in the Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Volunteer Infantry, which served in the Philippines for two years, and to which we shall recur later.

At Santiago the characteristic cheerfulness of the negro soldiers was as striking as their bravery. In his little book called The Nth Foot In War, Lieutenant M. B. Stewart says of them:--

"The negro troops were in a high good humor. They had made the charge of the day; they had fought with a dash and vigor which forever established their reputation as fighters, and which would carry them down in the pages of history. To have heard them that night no one would have ever thought that they had lived for twelve mortal hours under a galling fire. They were laughing and joking over the events of the day, in the same manner they would have done had they been returning from a picnic.

"'Golly,' laughed a six-foot sergeant, 'dere was music in de air sho' nuff. Dat lead was flying around in sheets, I tell you. I seen a buzzard flying around in front of our line, and I says to myself, "Buzzard, you is in a mighty dangerous position. You better git out uf dat, 'cause dey ain't room out dar for a muskeeter."' Another remarked, 'Say, did you see dat man Brown; pity dat man been killed. He'd a been a corporal, sho.'

"In the utter exhaustion of the moment all race and social distinctions were forgotten. Officers lay down among their men and slept like logs. The negro troops sought out soft places along the sides of the road and lay down with their white comrades. There was a little commotion among the latter, and an officer was heard to yell: 'Here, you man, take your feet off my stomach. Well, I'll be damned if it ain't a nigger. Get out, you black rascal.' As the commotion subsided, the negro was heard to remark, 'Well, if dat ain't de mos' particler man I ever see.'"

Characteristic also is a story of the negro cavalryman who, returning to the rear, said to some troops anxious to get to the front: "Dat's all right, gemmen; don't git in a sweat; dere's lots of it lef' for you. You wants to look out for dese yere sharpshooters, for dey is mighty careless with dere weapons, and dey is specially careless when dey is officers aroun'."

As soon as the army settled down in the trenches before Santiago,

smuggled musical instruments--guitars, banjos, mouth organs, and what not--appeared among the negro troops as if by magic, and they were ever in use. It was at once a scene of cheerfulness and gayety, and the officers had their usual trouble in making the men go to sleep instead of spending the night in talking, singing, and gaming. In the peaceful camp of the Third Alabama, in that state, the scenes were similar. There was always "a steady hum of laughter and talk, dance, song, shout, and the twang of musical instruments." It was "a scene full of life and fun, of jostling, scuffling, and racing, of clown performances and cake-walks, of impromptu minstrelsy, speech-making, and preaching, of deviling, guying, and fighting, both real and mimic." The colonel found great difficulty in getting men to work alone. Two would volunteer for any service. "Colonel," said a visitor to the camp, "your sentinels are sociable fellows. I saw No. 5 over at the end of his beat entertaining No. 6 with some fancy manual of arms. Afterwards, with equal amiability, No. 6 executed a most artistic cake-walk for his friend." It must be remembered here that this colonel's men were typical Southern negroes, literate and illiterate, and all new to military life.

In addition to the Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Volunteers, the four regular colored regiments have served in the Philippines. Here the work was particularly trying and the temptations to misconduct many. The Filipino women were especially attractive to the men because of their color, and it is on record that several soldiers were tempted from their allegiance to the United States. Two of these, whose sympathy and liking for the Filipinos overcame their judgment, paid the full penalty of desertion, being hanged by their former comrades. Both belonged to the Ninth Cavalry. On the other hand, in a remarkable order issued by General A. S. Burt in relinquishing command of the Twenty-fifth Infantry, on April 17, 1902, on his promotion to brigadier-general, he was able to quote the Inspector-General of the army as saying: "The Twenty-fifth Infantry is the best regiment I have seen in the Philippines." General Burt praised highly the excellent conduct of the enlisted men while in the Archipelago, which proved to his mind that the American negroes are "as law-abiding as any race in the world."

Three of General Burt's sergeants, Russell, McBryar, and Hoffman, were promoted to the Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Volunteers, and served, as lieutenants, for several months with their old regiment, the Twenty-fifth, until the arrival of their new regiments in Manila. During this time they were frequently under fire. General Burt bore high testimony to their soldierly bearing, their capacity and ability, and expressed great regret when he was forced to let them go. McBryar had won a medal of honor for gallantry against Indians in Arizona in 1890. In the Forty-ninth Volunteers, Company L, composed wholly of colored men, and commanded by Captain Edward L. Baker, a colored veteran of Santiago, who had served for seventeen years in the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry and in the Tenth "Immunes," made a wonderful record. According to a statement which was widely published at the time and never denied,

this company had on its rolls during a period of twelve months one hundred and six men who were fit for duty at all times and never lost a day on account of sickness. No white company remotely approached this record. More extraordinary still is the fact that during this same period not one of these men ever went before a court-martial. This is surely a striking illustration of what can be done by colored officers. It is noticeable, too, that neither the officers nor the men of any colored regiment have figured in the charges and counter-charges arising out of the use of the water-torture, except one man who at the time of his offense was not with his regiment. The Forty-ninth Volunteers was a very unhappy regiment during its brief life, but its troubles were largely due to its white officers. One of these, a major, was dismissed for misconduct, and his place was filled by the senior captain, a colored man. Several other white officers and one colored captain got into serious trouble, the last being dismissed. The Forty-eighth was, on the contrary, a contented organization in which the colored officers were treated in a kindly and courteous manner by their white associates and superiors. The two regiments afford a striking illustration of Napoleon's saying, "There are no such things as poor regiments,--only poor colonels."

The negro regiment unquestionably calls for different treatment from that which would be accorded to white troops, just as the Indian troops of King Edward's army require different handling from that called for in the case of the King's Royal Rifles. Yet as fighting machines, the Indian soldiers may be the equals if not the superiors of the Englishmen. Major Robert L. Bullard, Twenty-eighth United States Infantry who commanded the colored Third Alabama Volunteers, already referred to, during the war with Spain, discusses in a remarkable paper published in the United Service Magazine for July, 1901, the differences between negro and white soldiers. They are so great, he says, as to require the military commander to treat the negro as a different species. He must fit his methods of instruction and discipline to the characteristics of the race. Major Bullard adds that "mistakes, injustices, and failures would result from his making the same rules and methods apply to the two races without regard to how far apart set by nature or separated by evolution." But Major Bullard would unquestionably concede that these differences in no way require a treatment of the negro soldier which implies that he is an inferior being and which ever impresses upon him his inferiority. Yet this seems to have been the case in the Forty-ninth United States Volunteers.

In the regular army, as well as in the volunteers, officers have frequently appealed with success to the negroes' pride of race, and have urged them on to greater efficiency and better behavior by reminding them that they have the honor of their people in their hands. To such appeals there is ever a prompt response. One of the most effective ways of disciplining an offender is by holding him up to the ridicule of his fellows. The desire of the colored soldiers to amuse and to be amused

gives the officers an easy way of obtaining a hold upon them and their affections. The regimental rifle team, the baseball nine, the minstrel troupe, and the regimental band offer positions of importance for which the competition is much keener than in the white regiments. There is also a friendly rivalry between companies, which is much missed elsewhere in the service. The negroes are natural horsemen and riders. It is a pleasure to them to take care of their mounts, and a matter of pride to keep their animals in good condition. Personally they are clean and neat, and they take the greatest possible pride in their uniforms. In no white regiment is there a similar feeling. With the negroes the canteen question is of comparatively slight importance, not only because the men can be more easily amused within their barracks, but because their appetite for drink is by no means as strong as that of the white men. Their sociability is astonishing. They would rather sit up and tell stories and crack jokes than go to bed, no matter how hard the day has been.

The dark sides are, that the negro soldiers easily turn merited punishment into martyrdom, that their gambling propensities are almost beyond control, that their habit of carrying concealed weapons is incurable, and that there is danger of serious fighting when they fall out with one another. Frequent failure to act honorably toward a comrade in some trifling matter is apt to cause scuffling and fighting until the men are well disciplined. Women are another cause of quarrels, and are at all times a potent temptation to misconduct and neglect of duty. It is very difficult to impress upon the men the value of government property, and duty which requires memorizing of orders is always the most difficult to teach. For the study of guard duty manuals or of tactics they have no natural aptitude. The non-commissioned officers are of very great importance, and in the regulars they are looked up to and obeyed implicitly, much more so than is the case with white troops. It is necessary, however, for the officers to back up the sergeants and corporals very vigorously, even when they are slightly in the wrong. Then colored men are more easily "rattled" by poor officers than are their white comrades. There was a striking instance of this two or three years ago when a newly appointed and wholly untrained white officer lost his head at a post in Texas. His black subordinates, largely recruits, followed suit, and in carrying out his hysterical orders imperiled many lives in the neighboring town. Selections for service with colored troops should therefore be most carefully made. Major Bullard declares that the officer of negro troops "must not only be an officer and a gentleman, but he must be considerate, patient, laborious, self-sacrificing, a man of affairs, and he must have knowledge and wisdom in a great lot of things not really military."

If the position of a white officer is a difficult one, that of the colored officer is still more so. He has not the self-assumed superiority of the white man, naturally feels that he is on trial, and must worry himself incessantly about his relations to his white comrades

of the shoulder straps. While the United States Navy has hitherto been closed to negroes who aspire to be officers, the army has pursued a wiser and more just policy. The contrast between the two services is really remarkable. On almost every war vessel white and black sailors sleep and live together in crowded quarters without protest or friction. But the negro naval officer is kept out of the service by hook or by crook for the avowed reason that the cramped quarters of the wardroom would make association with him intolerable. In the army, on the other hand, the experiment of mixed regiments has never been tried. A good colored soldier can nevertheless obtain a commission by going through West Point, or by rising from the ranks, or by being appointed directly from civil life.

Since the foundation of the Military Academy there have been eighteen colored boys appointed to West Point, of whom fifteen failed in their preliminary examinations, or were discharged after entering because of deficiency in studies. Three were graduated and commissioned as second lieutenants of cavalry, Henry Ossian Flipper, John Hanks Alexander, and Charles Young. Of these, Lieutenant Flipper was dismissed June 30, 1882, for "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman." The other two proved themselves excellent officers, notably Young, who is at this writing a captain, and a most efficient one, in the Ninth Cavalry, with which he recently served in the Philippines. Lieutenant Alexander died suddenly in 1894. In announcing his death in a regimental order his colonel spoke of him in terms of high praise, and did not use the customary stereotyped phrases of regret. His fellow white officers all had good words for him. There never was more striking testimony to the discipline and spirit of fairness at West Point than was afforded by the sight of Cadet Charles Young, who is of very dark complexion, commanding white cadets. Nothing else has impressed foreign visitors at West Point half so much.

An equally remarkable happening, and one which speaks even more for the democratic spirit in the army, was the commissioning in 1901 of Sergeant-Major Benjamin O. Davis, Ninth Cavalry, and of Corporal John E. Green, Twenty-fourth Infantry. Both these men were examined by boards of white officers, who might easily have excluded them because of color prejudice, in which case there would have been no appeal from their findings. Lieutenant Davis's former troop commander, a West Pointer, openly rejoiced at his success, and predicted that he would make an excellent officer. These are the first two colored men to rise from the ranks, but there will be many more if the same admirable spirit of fair play continues to rule in the army and is not altered by outside prejudice. It was thought that there would be a severe strain upon discipline when a colored officer rose to the rank of captain and to the command of white officers. But in Captain Young's case his white subordinates seem to have realized that it is the position and rank that they are compelled to salute and obey, and not the individual. This principle is at the bottom of all discipline. Only too frequently do

subordinates throughout the army have to remind themselves of this when obeying men for whose social qualities and character they have neither regard nor respect. During the war with Spain Captain Young commanded a negro battalion from Ohio, which was pronounced the best drilled organization in the large army assembled at Camp Alger near Washington. In addition to these officers, Captain John R. Lynch, formerly a Congressman from Mississippi, and four colored chaplains represent their race on the commissioned rolls of the army. All of these men are doing well. One colored chaplain was dismissed for drunkenness in 1894. Beyond this their record is unblemished.

Despite the fairness shown in these appointments, there has been considerable very just criticism of the War Department for its failure to appoint to the regulars any of the colored officers who did well in the Forty-eighth and Forty-ninth Volunteers. Every colonel of volunteers was allowed to designate for examination for appointment to the regular army the best officers in his regiment. Hundreds of white officers were selected in this way, but not a single colored officer was given an examination,--not even Lieutenant McBryar, with his medal of honor, or Captain Baker. Similarly fault has been found with Secretary Root because no new colored regiments were established under the law of February 2, 1901, increasing the army by five regiments of infantry, five of cavalry, and a large number of companies of artillery. The excuse most often heard is that the negroes already have sufficient representation in comparison with the percentage of negroes to white persons within the borders of the United States. But the sterling characteristics of the colored soldiers, their loyalty to the service as shown by the statistics of desertion, and, above all, their splendid service in Cuba, should have entitled them to additional organizations. To say the least, the decision of the War Department smacks considerably of ingratitude. Nevertheless, the negro regiments have come to stay, both in the regulars and in the volunteers. The hostilities of the last five years have dispelled any doubt which may have existed upon this point.

## WHAT IS A COWBOY?

Project Gutenberg's *Buffalo Bill from Prairie to Palace*, by John M. Burke

Around the name of cowboy hangs a romance that will never die.

It is a romance interwoven with deeds of daring, nerve, and big-heartedness that will survive long after civilization has stamped out every need for the brave men who have been known by the name of cowboy.

[Illustration: COWBOYS LASSOING WILD HORSES.]

Our country is one that has sprung surprises upon the world from its very beginning, and it has produced men possible in no other land.

Without the services of the cowboy the vast grazing-lands of America would have been worthless.

As the buffalo, like the Indian, perished before the march of emigration westward, there came to take their place vast herds of beef-cattle, feeding on the plains where the once wild monarchs of the prairies had roamed.

With these immense herds it was necessary to have herders, and they became known by the somewhat picturesque cognomen of cowboy.

They are known from the flower-bespangled prairies of the Lone Star State to the land of the Frozen North, and their worth is recognized by those who know them as they are, for to their care is given the vast wealth of the cattlemen of the country, which is not alone in the beef furnished for the markets but to be found also in the tan-yards and factories of the East.

By many, who do not know him as he is, the cowboy is despised and generally feared.

He is looked upon as a wild, reckless fellow, armed to the teeth, keeping half-full of bad whisky, and always ready for a fight or some deed of deviltry.

How little is he known, and thus abused, for no braver hearts, no more generous motives, are to be found among men than are those that beat beneath the hunting-shirt of the cowboy, whether he comes from the country bordering on the Rio Grande, the great plains of the Southwest, the level prairies of the West, or the grazing-lands of Wyoming.

During night and day, storm and sunshine, danger and death, they are at their post of duty, always ready to be called upon, shrinking from no hardship, driven off by no peril, suffering untold privations, but ever ready to protect and care for the valuable herds that they control.

At times, when a temporary relief from duty comes to them, is it a wonder that they break forth into reckless hilarity?

They mean no harm to any one, and if, as in all communities, one goes beyond all bounds and the death of a comrade follows, the many must suffer for the deeds of the few.

The cowboy is composed of that stern stuff of which heroes are made,

and the poet and the novelist have always found in this rover of the plains the richest material for song and story.

In olden times it was that the boys of every land turned toward the sea as the Mecca of their hopes and ambitions.

They saw upon its broad bosom a field of adventure, a life of romance; and they sought to emulate great captains, good and bad.

But with the coming of steam-vessels the romance of the seas faded into oblivion; foreign lands were brought near; the mystery of the blue waters was solved in a most matter-of-fact way, and the growing youths of the country turned to new fields of adventure.

Columbus had won the admiration of would-be young heroes, and the heroic deeds of the grand old sailor were read with avidity, the boy longing some day to emulate them.

Even Kyd, Lafitte, Morgan, and other pirate captains became heroes in the minds of the average boy, who longed to run away to sea and make his name known in the world.

But steam dispelled these ambitions, and the American boy was forced to turn his hopes upon the land of the setting sun.

Daniel Boone was a hero to admire; David Crockett, Kit Carson, and others became the beau ideal of border heroes, and the heart of the youth thrilled in reading of these men in buckskin.

And these men of the wild West, of whom Buffalo Bill is the most conspicuous figure, made it possible for other border heroes to appear.

They sprung from the ranks of the army, from the emigrant's cabin, and from among those rangers of the plains, the cowboys.

These brave fellows have produced many a hero in their ranks, and they have been ever ready to battle for the weak against the strong.

The ranch and the cattle interests are being encroached upon by the advance of civilization, the mask of mystery is being torn from the wild borderland by the westward march of the iron horse, and in a few more years, like the scout, the guide, the trapper, and the hunter, the cowboy will be a thing of the past.

[Illustration: A BUCKING BRONCO.]

To be acknowledged as a true cowboy, and to the prairie born, one must possess accomplishments for the perilous and arduous work they have to undergo.

He must be a perfect horseman, handle a rope, catch a calf, throw and tie a steer, stop a crazy cow on a stampede, lasso a mustang, and be a good shot, guide, scout, and Indian fighter as well.

Let me here refer to a few incidents of a trip over the plains of a herd of cattle to the markets of the North, through the wild and unsettled portions of the Territories, varying in distance from fifteen hundred to two thousand miles, time three to six months, extending through the Indian Territory and Kansas to Nebraska, Colorado, Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, and sometimes as far as California. Immense herds, as high as thirty thousand or more, are moved by single owners, but are driven in bands of from one to three thousand, which, when under way, are designated "herds." Each of these have from ten to fifteen men, with a wagon-driver and cook, and the "king-pin of the outfit," the boss, with a supply of two or three ponies to a man, an ox-team, and blankets; also jerked-beef and corn-meal--the staple food. They are also furnished with mavericks, or "doubtless-owned" yearlings, for the fresh-meat supply. After getting fully under way, and the cattle broke in, from ten to fifteen miles a day is the average, and everything is plain sailing in fair weather. As night comes on the cattle are rounded up in a small compass, and held until they lie down, when two men are left on watch, riding round and round them in opposite directions, singing or whistling all the time, for two hours, that being the length of each watch. The singing is absolutely necessary, as it seems to soothe the fears of the cattle, scares away the wolves or other varmints that may be prowling around, and prevents them from hearing any other accidental sound, or dreaming of their old homes; and if stopped would in all probability be the signal for a general stampede. "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," if a cowboy's compulsory bawling out lines of his own composition:

Lie nicely now, cattle, don't heed any rattle,
    But quietly rest until morn;
For if you skedaddle, we'll jump in the saddle,
    And head you as sure as you're born,

can be considered such.

Ordinarily so clumsy and stupid-looking, a thousand beef-steers can rise like a flock of quail on the roof of an exploding powder-mill, and will scud away like a tumble-weed before a high wind, with a noise like a receding earthquake. Then comes fun and frolic for the boys. Many a cowboy has lost his life in one of these wild stampedes of cattle, which would put an army of men to flight in a mad charge down upon them.

[Illustration: A CATTLE STAMPEDE.]

The next great trouble is in crossing streams, which are invariably

high in the driving season. When cattle strike swimming-water, they generally try to turn back, which eventuates in their “milling”--that is, swimming in a circle--and if allowed to continue would result in the drowning of many. Then the daring herder must leave his pony, doff his togs, scramble over their backs and horns, to scatter them, and with whoops and yells, splashing, dashing, and didos in the water, scare them to the opposite bank. This is not always done in a moment, for a steer is no fool of a swimmer. One has been seen to hold his own for six hours in the gulf, after having jumped overboard. As some of the streams are very rapid, and a quarter to a half mile wide, considerable drifting is done. Then the naked herder has plenty of amusement in the hot sun, fighting green-head flies and mosquitoes, and peeping around for Indians, until the rest of the lay-out is put over--not an easy job. A temporary boat has to be made of the wagon-box by tacking the canvas cover over the bottom, with which the ammunition and grub is ferried across, and the running-gear and ponies are swum over afterward. Indian fights and horse-thief troubles are part of the regular rations. Mixing with other herds and cutting them out, again avoiding too much water at times and hunting for a drop at others, belongs to the regular routine.

Such is the cowboy of the wild West, who, if not without faults, has virtues to compensate for the little eccentricities that cling to men of the frontier.

## DISGRACEFUL PERSECUTION OF A BOY

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Sketches New and Old, Part 3*.
by Mark Twain

In San Francisco, the other day, "A well-dressed boy, on his way to Sunday-school, was arrested and thrown into the city prison for stoning Chinamen."

What a commentary is this upon human justice! What sad prominence it gives to our human disposition to tyrannize over the weak! San Francisco has little right to take credit to herself for her treatment of this poor boy. What had the child's education been? How should he suppose it was wrong to stone a Chinaman? Before we side against him, along with outraged San Francisco, let us give him a chance--let us hear the testimony for the defense.

He was a "well-dressed" boy, and a Sunday-school scholar, and therefore the chances are that his parents were intelligent, well-to-do people, with just enough natural villainy in their composition to make them yearn after the daily papers, and enjoy them; and so this boy had opportunities

to learn all through the week how to do right, as well as on Sunday.

It was in this way that he found out that the great commonwealth of California imposes an unlawful mining-tax upon John the foreigner, and allows Patrick the foreigner to dig gold for nothing--probably because the degraded Mongol is at no expense for whisky, and the refined Celt cannot exist without it.

It was in this way that he found out that a respectable number of the tax-gatherers--it would be unkind to say all of them--collect the tax twice, instead of once; and that, inasmuch as they do it solely to discourage Chinese immigration into the mines, it is a thing that is much applauded, and likewise regarded as being singularly facetious.

It was in this way that he found out that when a white man robs a sluice-box (by the term white man is meant Spaniards, Mexicans, Portuguese, Irish, Hondurans, Peruvians, Chileans, etc., etc.), they make him leave the camp; and when a Chinaman does that thing, they hang him.

It was in this way that he found out that in many districts of the vast Pacific coast, so strong is the wild, free love of justice in the hearts of the people, that whenever any secret and mysterious crime is committed, they say, "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall," and go straightway and swing a Chinaman.

It was in this way that he found out that by studying one half of each day's "local items," it would appear that the police of San Francisco were either asleep or dead, and by studying the other half it would seem that the reporters were gone mad with admiration of the energy, the virtue, the high effectiveness, and the dare-devil intrepidity of that very police-making exultant mention of how "the Argus-eyed officer So-and-so" captured a wretched knave of a Chinaman who was stealing chickens, and brought him gloriously to the city prison; and how "the gallant officer Such-and-such-a-one" quietly kept an eye on the movements of an "unsuspecting, almond-eyed son of Confucius" (your reporter is nothing if not facetious), following him around with that far-off look. of vacancy and unconsciousness always so finely affected by that inscrutable being, the forty-dollar policeman, during a waking interval, and captured him at last in the very act of placing his hands in a suspicious manner upon a paper of tacks, left by the owner in an exposed situation; and how one officer performed this prodigious thing, and another officer that, and another the other--and pretty much every one of these performances having for a dazzling central incident a Chinaman guilty of a shilling's worth of crime, an unfortunate, whose misdemeanor must be hurrahed into something enormous in order to keep the public from noticing how many really important rascals went uncaptured in the mean time, and how overrated those glorified policemen actually are.

It was in this way that the boy found out that the legislature, being

aware that the Constitution has made America, an asylum for the poor and the oppressed of all nations, and that, therefore, the poor and oppressed who fly to our shelter must not be charged a disabling admission fee, made a law that every Chinaman, upon landing, must be vaccinated upon the wharf, and pay to the state's appointed officer ten dollars for the service, when there are plenty of doctors in San Francisco who would be glad enough to do it for him for fifty cents.

It was in this way that the boy found out that a Chinaman had no rights that any man was bound to respect; that he had no sorrows that any man was bound to pity; that neither his life nor his liberty was worth the purchase of a penny when a white man needed a scapegoat; that nobody loved Chinamen, nobody befriended them, nobody spared them suffering when it was convenient to inflict it; everybody, individuals, communities, the majesty of the state itself, joined in hating, abusing, and persecuting these humble strangers.

And, therefore, what could have been more natural than for this sunny-hearted-boy, tripping along to Sunday-school, with his mind teeming with freshly learned incentives to high and virtuous action, to say to himself:

"Ah, there goes a Chinaman!  God will not love me if I do not stone him."

And for this he was arrested and put in the city jail.

Everything conspired to teach him that it was a high and holy thing to stone a Chinaman, and yet he no sooner attempts to do his duty than he is punished for it--he, poor chap, who has been aware all his life that one of the principal recreations of the police, out toward the Gold Refinery, is to look on with tranquil enjoyment while the butchers of Brannan Street set their dogs on unoffending Chinamen, and make them flee for their lives.

--[I have many such memories in my mind, but am thinking just at present of one particular one, where the Brannan Street butchers set their dogs on a Chinaman who was quietly passing with a basket of clothes on his head; and while the dogs mutilated his flesh, a butcher increased the hilarity of the occasion by knocking some of the Chinaman's teeth down his throat with half a brick.  This incident sticks in my memory with a more malevolent tenacity, perhaps, on account of the fact that I was in the employ of a San Francisco journal at the time, and was not allowed to publish it because it might offend some of the peculiar element that subscribed for the paper.]

Keeping in mind the tuition in the humanities which the entire "Pacific coast" gives its youth, there is a very sublimity of incongruity in the virtuous flourish with which the good city fathers of San Francisco proclaim (as they have lately done) that "The police are positively

ordered to arrest all boys, of every description and wherever found, who engage in assaulting Chinamen."

Still, let us be truly glad they have made the order, notwithstanding its inconsistency; and let us rest perfectly confident the police are glad, too. Because there is no personal peril in arresting boys, provided they be of the small kind, and the reporters will have to laud their performances just as loyally as ever, or go without items.

The new form for local items in San Francisco will now be: "The ever-vigilant and efficient officer So-and-so succeeded, yesterday afternoon, in arresting Master Tommy Jones, after a determined resistance," etc., etc., followed by the customary statistics and final hurrah, with its unconscious sarcasm: "We are happy in being able to state that this is the forty-seventh boy arrested by this gallant officer since the new ordinance went into effect. The most extraordinary activity prevails in the police department. Nothing like it has been seen since we can remember."

+INSOLENT BLACKS+
Project Gutenberg's *Mob Rule in New Orleans*, by Ida B. Wells-Barnett

"Recorder Hughes received Negroes in the first recorder's office yesterday morning in a way that they will remember for a long time, and all of them were before the magistrate for having caused trouble through incendiary remarks concerning the death of Captain Day and Patrolman Lamb."

"Lee Jackson was before the recorder and was fined $25 or thirty days. He was lippy around where the trouble happened Tuesday morning, and some white men punched him good and hard and the police took him. Then the recorder gave him a dose, and now he is in the parish prison."

"John Kennedy was another black who got into trouble. He said that the shooting of the police by Charles was a good thing, and for this he was pounded. Patrolman Lorenzo got him and saved him from being lynched, for the black had an open razor. He was fined $25 or thirty days."

"Edward McCarthy, a white man, mixed up with the crowd, and an expression of sympathy nearly cost him his head, for some whites about started for him, administering licks and blows with fists and umbrellas. The recorder fined him $25 or thirty days. He is from New York."

"Then James Martin, a white man, and Simon Montegut, Eddie Call, Henry Turner and Alex Washington were before the magistrate for having failed to move on when the police ordered them from the square where the bluecoats were Tuesday, waiting in the hope of catching Charles. All save Martin and Montegut were fined."

"Eddie Williams, a little Negro who was extremely fresh with the police, was fined $10 or ten days."

+SHOCKING BRUTALITY+

The whole city was at the mercy of the mob and the display of brutality was a disgrace to civilization. One instance is described in the _Picayune_ as follows:

A smaller party detached itself from the mob at Washington and Rampart Streets, and started down the latter thoroughfare. One of the foremost spied a Negro, and immediately there was a rush for the unfortunate black man. With the sticks they had torn from fences on the line of march the young outlaws attacked the black and clubbed him unmercifully, acting more like demons than human beings. After being severely beaten over the head, the Negro started to run with the whole gang at his heels. Several revolvers were brought into play and pumped their lead at the refugee. The Negro made rapid progress and took refuge behind the blinds of a little cottage in Rampart Street, but he had been seen, and the mob hauled him from his hiding place and again commenced beating him. There were more this time, some twenty or thirty, all armed with sticks and heavy clubs, and under their incessant blows the Negro could not last long. He begged for mercy, and his cries were most pitiful, but a mob has no heart, and his cries were only answered with more blows.

"For God's sake, boss, I ain't done nothin'. Don't kill me. I swear I ain't done nothin'."

The white brutes turned

+ A DEAF EAR TO THE PITYING CRIES+

of the black wretch and the drubbing continued. The cries subsided into moans, and soon the black swooned away into unconsciousness. Still not content with their heartless work, they pulled the Negro out and kicked him into the gutter. For the time those who had beaten the black seemed satisfied and left him groaning in the gutter, but others came up, and, regretting that they had not had a hand in the affair, they determined to evidence their bravery to their fellows and beat the man while he was in the gutter, hurling rocks and stones at his black form. One thoughtless white brute, worse even than the black slayer of the police officers, thought to make himself a hero in the eyes of his fellows and fired his revolver repeatedly into the helpless wretch. It was dark and the fellow probably aimed carelessly. After firing three or four shots he also left without knowing what extent of injury he inflicted on the black wretch who was left lying in the gutter.

+MURDER ON THE LEVEE+

One part of the crowd made a raid on the tenderloin district, hoping to find there some belated Negro for a sacrifice. They were urged on by the white prostitutes, who applauded their murderous mission. Says an account:

> The red light district was all excitement. Women--that is, the white women--were out on their stoops and peeping over their galleries and through their windows and doors, shouting to the crowd to go on with their work, and kill Negroes for them.
>
> "Our best wishes, boys," they encouraged; and the mob answered with shouts, and whenever a Negro house was sighted a bombardment was started on the doors and windows.

No colored men were found on the streets until the mob reached Custom House Place and Villiers Streets. Here a victim was found and brutally put to death. The _Picayune_ description is as follows:

> Some stragglers had run a Negro into a car at the corner of Bienville and Villere Streets. He was seeking refuge in the conveyance, and he believed that the car would not be stopped and could speed along. But the mob determined to stop the car, and ordered the motorman to halt. He put on his brake. Some white men were in the car.
>
> "Get out, fellows," shouted several of the mob.
>
> "All whites fall out," was the second cry, and the poor Negro understood that it was meant that he should stay in the car.
>
> He wanted to save his life. The poor fellow crawled under the seats. But some one in the crowd saw him and yelled that he was hiding. Two or three men climbed through the windows with their pistols; others jumped over the motorman's board, and dozens tumbled into the rear of the car. Big, strong hands got the Negro by the shirt. He was dragged out of the conveyance, and was pushed to the street. Some fellow ran up and struck him with a club. The blow was heavy, but it did not fell him, and the Negro ran toward Canal Street, stealing along the wall of the Tulane Medical Building. Fifty men ran after him, caught the poor fellow and hurried him back into the crowd. Fists were aimed at him, then clubs went upon his shoulders, and finally the black plunged into the gutter.
>
> A gun was fired, and the Negro, who had just gotten to his feet, dropped again. He tried to get up, but a volley was sent after him, and in a little while he was dead.

The crowd looked on at the terrible work. Then the lights in the houses of ill-fame began to light up again, and women peeped out of the blinds. The motorman was given the order to go on. The gong clanged and the conveyance sped out of the way. For half an hour the crowd held their place at the corner, then the patrol wagon came and the body was picked up and hurried to the morgue.

Coroner Richard held an autopsy on the body of the Negro who was forced out of car 98 of the Villere line and shot down. It was found that he was wounded four times, the most serious wound being that which struck him in the right side, passing through the lungs, and causing hemorrhages, which brought about death.

Nobody tried to identify the poor fellow and his name is unknown.

## THE STORY OF KID McDUFF'S GIRL

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Children of the Poor,* by Jacob A. Riis

The back room of the saloon on the northwest corner of Pell Street and the Bowery is never cheery on the brightest day. The entrance to the dives of Chinatown yawns just outside, and in the bar-room gather the vilest of the wrecks of the Bend and the Sixth Ward slums. But on the morning of which I speak a shadow lay over it even darker than usual. The shadow of death was there. In the corner, propped on one chair, with her feet on another, sat a dead woman. Her glassy eyes looked straight ahead with a stony, unmeaning stare until the policeman who dozed at a table at the other end of the room, suddenly waking up and meeting it, got up with a shudder and covered the face with a handkerchief.

What did they see, those dead eyes? Through its darkened windows what a review was the liberated spirit making of that sin-worn, wasted life, begun in innocence and wasted--there? Whatever their stare meant, the policeman knew little of it and cared less.

"Oh! it is just a stiff," he said, and yawned wearily. There was still half an hour of his watch.

The clinking of glasses and the shuffle of cowhide boots on the sanded floor outside grew louder and was muffled again as the door leading to the bar was opened and shut by a young woman. She lingered doubtfully on the threshold a moment, then walked with unsteady step across the room toward the corner where the corpse sat. The light that struggled in from the gloomy street fell upon her and showed that she trembled, as if with the ague. Yet she was young, not over twenty-five; but on her heavy eyes and sodden features there was the stamp death had just blotted from the other's face with the memory of her sins. Yet, curiously blended with it,

not yet smothered wholly, there was something of the child, something that had once known a mother's love and pity.

"Poor Kid," she said, stopping beside the body and sinking heavily in a chair. "He will be sorry, anyhow."

"Who is Kid?" I asked.

"Why, Kid McDuff! You know him? His brother Jim keeps the saloon on ---- Street. Everybody knows Kid."

"Well, what was she to Kid?" I asked, pointing to the corpse.

"His girl," she said promptly. "An' he stuck to her till he was pulled for the job he didn't do; then he had to let her slide. She stuck to him too, you bet.

"Annie wasn't no more nor thirteen when she was tuk away from home by the Kid," the girl went on, talking as much to herself as to me; the policeman nodded in his chair. "He kep' her the best he could, 'ceptin' when he was sent up on the Island the time the gang went back on him. Then she kinder drifted. But she was all right agin he come back and tuk to keepin' bar for his brother Jim. Then he was pulled for that Bridgeport skin job, and when he went to the pen she went to the bad, and now----"

Here a thought that had been slowly working down through her besotted mind got a grip on her strong enough to hold her attention, and she leaned over and caught me by the sleeve, something almost akin to pity struggling in her bleary eyes.

"Say, young feller," she whispered hoarsely, "don't spring this too hard. She's got two lovely brothers. One of them keeps a daisy saloon up on Eighth Avenue. They're respectable, they are."

Then she went on telling what she knew of Annie Noonan who was sitting dead there before us. It was not much. She was the child of an honest shoemaker who came to this country twenty-two or three years before from his English home, when Annie was a little girl of six or seven. Before she was in her teens she was left fatherless. At the age of thirteen, when she was living in an East Side tenement with her mother, the Kid, then a young tough qualifying with one of the many gangs about the Hook for the penitentiary, crossed her path. Ever after she was his slave, and followed where he led.

The path they trod together was not different from that travelled by hundreds of young men and women to-day. By way of the low dives and "morgues" with which the East Side abounds, it led him to the Island and her to the street. When he was sent up the first time, his mother died of a broken heart. His father, a well-to-do mechanic in the Seventh Ward, had

been spared that misery. He had died before the son was fairly started on his bad career. The family were communicants at the parish church, and efforts without end were made to turn the Kid from his career of wicked folly. His two sisters labored faithfully with him, but without avail. When the Kid came back from the Island to find his mother dead, he did not know his oldest sister. Grief had turned her pretty brown hair a snowy white.

He found his girl a little the worse for rum and late hours than when he left her, but he "took up" with her again. He was loyal at least. This time he tried, too, to be honest. His mother's death had shocked him to the point where his "nerve" gave out. His brother gave him charge of one of his saloons and the Kid was "at work" keeping bar, with the way to respectability, as it goes on the East Side, open to him, when one of his old pals, who had found him out, turned up with a demand for money. He was a burglar and wanted a hundred dollars to "do up a job" in the country. The Kid refused, and his brother came in during the quarrel that ensued, flew into a rage, and grabbing the thief by the collar, threw him into the street. He went his way shaking his fist and threatening vengeance on both.

It was not long in coming. A jewelry store in Bridgeport was robbed and two burglars were arrested. One of them was the man "Jim" McDuff had thrown out of his saloon. He turned State's evidence and swore that the Kid was in the job too. He was arrested and held in bail of ten thousand dollars. The Kid always maintained that he was innocent. His family believed him, but his past was against him. It was said, too, that back of the arrest was political persecution. His brother the saloon-keeper, who mixed politics with his beer, was the under dog just then in the fight in his ward. The situation was discussed from a practical standpoint in the McDuff household, and it ended with the Kid going up to Bridgeport and pleading guilty to theft to escape the worse charge of burglary. He was sentenced to four years' imprisonment. That was how he got into "the pen."

Annie, after he had been put in jail, went to the dogs on her own account rather faster than when they made a team. For a time she frequented the saloons of the Tenth Ward. When she crossed the Bowery at last she was nearing the end. For a year or two she frequented the disreputable houses in Elizabeth and Hester Streets. She was supposed to have a room in Downing Street, but it was the rarest of all events that she was there.

Two weeks before this morning, Fay Leslie, the girl who sat there telling me her story, met her on the Bowery with a cut and bruised face. She had been beaten in a fight in a Pell Street saloon with Flossie Lowell, one of the habitues of Chinatown. Fay took her to Bellevue Hospital, where she "had a pull with the night watch," she told me, and she was kept there three or four days. When she came out she drifted back to Pell Street and took to drinking again. But she was a sick girl.

The night before she was with Fay in the saloon on the corner, when she complained that she did not feel well. She sat down in a chair and put her feet on another. In that posture she was found dead a little later, when her friend went to see how she was getting on.

"Rum killed her, I suppose," I said, when Fay had ended her story.

"Yes! I suppose it did."

"And you," I ventured, "some day it will kill you too, if you do not look out."

The girl laughed a loud and coarse laugh.

"Me?" she said, "not by a jugful. I've been soaking it fifteen years and I am alive yet."

The dead girl sat there yet, with the cold, staring eyes, when I went my way. Outside the drinking went on with vile oaths. The dead wagon had been sent for, but it had other errands, and had not yet come around to Pell Street.

Thus ended the story of Kid McDuff's girl.

## IN KANSAS: THE FIRST HARVEST

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty,* by Nicholas Vachel Lindsay

MONDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 1, 1912. A little west of Newton, Kansas. In the public library of a village whose name I forget.

Here is the story of how I came to harvest. I was by chance taking a short respite from the sunshine, last Monday noon, on the porch of the Mennonite farmer. I had had dinner further back. But the good folk asked me to come in and have dessert anyway. It transpired that one of the two harvest hands was taking his farewell meal. He was obliged to fill a contract to work further West, a contract made last year. I timidly suggested I might take his place. To my astonishment I was engaged at once. This fellow was working for two dollars a day, but I agreed to $1.75, seeing my predecessor was a skilled man and twice as big as I was. My wages, as I discovered, included three rich meals, and a pretty spare room to sleep in, and a good big bucket to bathe in nightly.

I anticipate history at this point by telling how at the end of the

week my wages looked as strange to me as a bunch of unexpected ducklets to a hen. They were as curious to contemplate as a group of mischievous nieces who have come to spend the day with their embarrassed, fluttering maiden aunt.

I took my wages to Newton, and spent all on the vanities of this life. First the grandest kind of a sombrero, so I shall not be sunstruck in the next harvest-field, which I narrowly escaped in this. Next, the most indestructible of corduroys. Then I had my shoes re-soled and bought a necktie that was like the oriflamme of Navarre, and attended to several other points of vanity. I started out again, dead broke and happy. If I work hereafter I can send most all my wages home, for I am now in real travelling costume.

But why linger over the question of wages till I show I earned those wages?

Let me tell you of a typical wheat-harvesting day. The field is two miles from the house. We make preparations for a twelve-hour siege. Halters and a barrel of water and a heap of alfalfa for the mules, binder-twine and oil for the reaper and water-jugs for us are loaded into the spring wagon. Two mules are hitched in front, two are led behind. The new reaper was left in the field yesterday. We make haste. We must be at work by the time the dew dries. The four mules are soon hitched to the reaper and proudly driven into the wheat by the son of the old Mennonite. This young fellow carries himself with proper dignity as heir of the farm. He is a credit to the father. He will not curse the mules, though those animals forget their religion sometimes, and act after the manner of their kind. The worst he will do will be to call one of them an old cow. I suppose when he is vexed with a cow he calls it an old mule. My other companion is a boy of nineteen from a Mennonite community in Pennsylvania. He sets me a pace. Together we build the sheaves into shocks, of eight or ten sheaves each, put so they will not be shaken by an ordinary Kansas wind. The wind has been blowing nearly all the time at a rate which in Illinois would mean a thunderstorm in five minutes, and sometimes the clouds loom in the thunderstorm way, yet there is not a drop of rain, and the clouds are soon gone.

In the course of the week the boy and I have wrestled with heavy ripe sheaves, heavier green sheaves, sheaves full of Russian thistles and sheaves with the string off. The boy, as he sings _The day-star hath risen_, twists a curious rope of straw and reties the loose bundles with one turn of the hand. I try, but cannot make the knot. Once all sheaves were so bound.

Much of the wheat must be cut heavy and green because there is a liability to sudden storms or hail that will bury it in mud, or soften the ground and make it impossible to drag the reaper, or hot winds

that suddenly ripen the loose grain and shake it into the earth. So it is an important matter to get the wheat out when it is anywhere near ready. I found that two of the girls were expecting to take the place of the departing hand, if I had not arrived.

The Mennonite boy picked up two sheaves to my one at the beginning of the week. To-day I learn to handle two at a time and he immediately handles three at a time. He builds the heart of the sheaf. Then we add the outside together. He is always marching ahead and causing me to feel ashamed.

The Kansas grasshopper makes himself friendly. He bites pieces out of the back of my shirt the shape and size of the ace of spades. Then he walks into the door he has made and loses himself. Then he has to be helped out, in one way or another.

The old farmer, too stiff for work, comes out on his dancing pony and rides behind the new reaper. This reaper was bought only two days ago and he beams with pride upon it. It seems that he and his son almost swore, trying to tinker the old one. The farmer looks with even more pride upon the field, still a little green, but mostly golden. He dismounts and tests the grain, threshing it out in his hand, figuring the average amount in several typical heads. He stands off, and is guilty of an æsthetic thrill. He says of the sea of gold: "I wish I could have a photograph of that." (O eloquent word, for a Mennonite!) Then he plays at building half a dozen shocks, then goes home till late in the afternoon. We three are again masters of the field.

We are in a level part of Kansas, not a rolling range as I found it further east. The field is a floor. Hedges gradually faded from the landscape in counties several days' journey back, leaving nothing but unbroken billows to the horizon. But the hedges have been resumed in this region. Each time round the enormous field we stop at a break in the line of those untrimmed old thorn-trees. Here we rest a moment and drink from the water-jug. To keep from getting sunstruck I profanely waste the water, pouring it on my head, and down my neck to my feet. I came to this farm wearing a derby, and have had to borrow a slouch with a not-much-wider rim from the farmer. It was all the extra headgear available in this thrifty region. Because of that not-much-wider rim my face is sunburned all over every day. I have not yet received my wages to purchase my sombrero.

As we go round the field, the Mennonite boy talks religion, or is silent. I have caught the spirit of the farm, and sing all the hymn-tunes I can remember. Sometimes the wind turns hot. Perspiration cannot keep up with evaporation. Our skins are dry as the dryest stubble. Then we stand and wait for a little streak of cool wind. It is pretty sure to come in a minute. "That's a nice air," says the boy, and gets to work. Once it was so hot all three of us stopped five

minutes by the hedge. Then it was I told them the story of the hens I met just west of Emporia.

I had met ten hens walking single-file into the town of Emporia. I was astonished to meet educated hens. Each one was swearing. I would not venture, I added, to repeat what they said.

_Not a word from the Mennonites._

I continued in my artless way, showing how I stopped the next to the last hen, though she was impatient to go on. I inquired "Where are you all travelling?" She said "To Emporia." And so I asked, "Why are you swearing so?" She answered, "Don't you know about the Sunday-school picnic?" I paused in my story.

_No word from the Mennonites. One of them rose rather impatiently._

I poured some water on my head and continued: "I stopped the last hen. I asked: "Why are you swearing, sister? And what about the picnic?" She replied: "These Emporia people are going to give a Sunday-school picnic day after to-morrow. Meantime all us hens have to lay devilled eggs."

"We do not laugh at jokes about swearing," said the Mennonite driver, and climbed back on to his reaper. My partner strode solemnly out into the sun and began to pile sheaves.

Each round we study our shadows on the stubble more closely, thrilled with the feeling that noon creeps on. And now, up the road we see a bit of dust and a rig. No, it is not the woman we are looking for, but a woman with supplies for other harvesters. We work on and on, while four disappointing rigs go by. At last appears a sunbonnet we know. Our especial Mennonite maid is sitting quite straight on the edge of the seat and holding the lines almost on a level with her chin. She drives through the field toward us. We motion her to the gap in the hedge.

We unhitch, and lead the mules to the gap, where she joins us. With much high-minded expostulation the men try to show the mules they should eat alfalfa and not hedge-thorns. The mules are at last tied out in the sun to a wheel of the wagon, away from temptation, with nothing but alfalfa near them.

The meal is spread with delicacy, yet there is a heap of it. With a prayer of thanksgiving, sometimes said by Tilly, sometimes by one of the men, we begin to eat. To a man in a harvest-field a square meal is more thrilling than a finely-acted play.

The thrill goes not only to the toes and the finger-tips, but to the

utmost ramifications of the spirit. Men indoors in offices, whose bodies actually require little, cannot think of eating enormously without thinking of sodden overeating, with condiments to rouse, and heavy meats and sweets to lull the flabby body till the last faint remnants of appetite have departed and the man is a monument of sleepy gluttony.

Eating in a harvest field is never so. Every nerve in the famished body calls frantically for reinforcements. And the nerves and soul of a man are strangely alert together. All we ate for breakfast turned to hot ashes in our hearts at eleven o'clock. I sing of the body and of the eternal soul, revived again! To feel life actually throbbing back into one's veins, life immense in passion, pulse and power, is not over-eating.

Tilly has brought us knives, and no forks. It would have been more appropriate if we had eaten from the ends of swords. We are finally recuperated from the fevers of the morning and almost strong enough for the long, long afternoon fight with the sun. Fresh water is poured from a big glittering can into the jugs we have sucked dry. Tilly reloads the buggy and is gone. After another sizzling douse of water without and within, our long afternoon pull commences.

The sun has become like a roaring lion, and we wrestle with the sheaves as though we had him by the beard. The only thing that keeps up my nerve in the dizziness is the remembrance of the old Mennonite's proverb at breakfast that as long as a man can eat and sweat he is safe. My hands inside my prickling gloves seem burning off. The wheat beards there are like red-hot needles. But I am still sweating a little in the chest, and the Mennonite boy is cheerfully singing:

> "When I behold the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of Glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss
> And pour contempt on all my pride."

Two-thirds round the field, methinks the jig is up. Then the sun is hidden by a friend of ours in the sky, just the tiniest sort of a cloud and we march on down the rows. The merciful little whiff of dream follows the sun for half an hour.

The most terrible heat is at half-past two. Somehow we pull through till four o'clock. Then we say to ourselves: "We can stand this four-o'clock heat, because we have stood it hotter."

'Tis a grim matter of comparison. We speed up a little and trot a little as the sun reaches the top of the western hedge. A bit later the religious hired man walks home to do the chores. I sing down the rows by myself. It is glorious to work now. The endless reiterations

of the day have developed a certain dancing rhythm in one's nerves, one is intoxicated with his own weariness and the conceit that comes with seizing the sun by the mane, like Sampson.

It is now that the sun gracefully acknowledges his defeat. He shows through the hedge as a great blur, that is all. Then he becomes a mist-wrapped golden mountain that some fairy traveller might climb in enchanted shoes. This sun of ours is no longer an enemy, but a fantasy, a vision and a dream.

Now the elderly proprietor is back on his dancing pony. He is following the hurrying reaper in a sort of ceremonial fashion, delighted to see the wheat go down so fast. At last this particular field is done. We finish with a comic-tragedy. Some little rabbits scoot, panic-stricken, from the last few yards of still-standing grain. The old gentleman on horseback and his son afoot soon out-manoeuvre the lively creatures. We have rabbit for supper at the sacrifice of considerable Mennonite calm.

It was with open rejoicing on the part of all that we finished the field nearest the house, the last one, by Saturday noon. The boy and I had our own special thrill in catching up with the reaper, which had passed by us so often in our rounds. As the square in mid-field grows smaller the reaper has to turn oftener, and turning uses up much more time than at first appears.

The places where the armies of wheat-sheaves are marshalled are magic places, despite their sweat and dust. There is nothing small in the panorama. All the lines of the scene are epic. The binder-twine is invisible, and has not altered the eternal classic form of the sheaf. There is a noble dignity and ease in the motion of a new reaper on a level field. A sturdy Mennonite devotee marching with a great bundle of wheat under each arm and reaching for a third makes a picture indeed, an essay on sunshine beyond the brush of any impressionist. Each returning day while riding to the field, when one has a bit of time to dream, one feels these things. One feels also the essentially patriarchal character of the harvest. One thinks of the Book of Ruth, and the Jewish feasts of ingathering. All the new Testament parables ring in one's ears, parables of sowing and reaping, of tares and good grain, of Bread and of Leaven and the story of the Disciples plucking corn. As one looks on the half-gathered treasure he thinks on the solemn words: "For the Bread of God is that which cometh down out of Heaven and giveth life unto the World," and the rest of that sermon on the Bread of Life, which has so many meanings.

This Sunday before breakfast, I could fully enter into the daily prayers, that at times had appeared merely quaint to me, and in my heart I said "Amen" to the special thanksgiving the patriarch lifted up for the gift of the fruit of the land. I was happy indeed that I

had had the strength to bear my little part in the harvest of a noble and devout household, as well as a hand in the feeding of the wide world.

What I, a stranger, have done in this place, thirty thousand strangers are doing just a little to the west. We poor tramps are helping to garner that which reestablishes the nations. If only for a little while, we have bent our backs over the splendid furrows, to save a shining gift that would otherwise rot, or vanish away.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, JULY FOURTH, 1912. In the shadow of a lonely windmill between Raymond and Ellinwood, Kansas.

I arrived hot and ravenous at Raymond about eleven A.M. on this glorious Independence Day, having walked twelve miles facing a strange wind. At first it seemed fairly cool, because it travelled at the rate of an express train. But it was really hot and alkaline, and almost burnt me up. I had had for breakfast a cooky, some raisins and a piece of cheese, purchased with my booklet of rhymes at a grocery. By the time I reached Raymond I was fried and frantic.

The streets were deserted. I gathered from the station-master that almost everyone had gone to the Dutch picnic in the grove near Ellinwood. The returns for the Johnson-Flynn fight were to be received there beneath the trees, and a potent variety of dry-state beverage was to flow free. The unveracious station-master declared this beverage was made of equal parts iron-rust, patent medicine and rough-on-rats, added to a barrel of brown rain-water. He appeared to be prejudiced against it.

I walked down the street. Just as I had somehow anticipated, I spied out a certain type of man. He was alone in his restaurant and I crouched my soul to spring. The only man left in town is apt to be a soft-hearted party. "Here, as sure as my name is tramp, I will wrestle with a defenceless fellow-being."

Like many a restaurant in Kansas, it was a sort of farm-hand's Saturday night paradise. If a man cannot loaf in a saloon he will loaf in a restaurant. Then certain problems of demand and supply arise according to circumstances and circumlocutions.

I obtained leave for the ice-water without wrestling. I almost emptied the tank. Then, with due art, I offered to recite twenty poems to the solitary man, a square meal to be furnished at the end, if the rhymes were sufficiently fascinating.

Assuming a judicial attitude on the lunch-counter stool he put me in the arm-chair by the ice-chest and told me to unwind myself. As usual,

I began with _The Proud Farmer_, _The Illinois Village_ and _The Building of Springfield_, which three in series contain my whole gospel, directly or by implication. Then I wandered on through all sorts of rhyme. He nodded his head like a mandarin, at the end of each recital. Then he began to get dinner. He said he liked my poetry, and he was glad I came in, for he would feel more like getting something to eat himself. I sat on and on by the ice-chest while he prepared a meal more heating than the morning wind or the smell of fire-crackers in the street. First, for each man, a slice of fried ham large enough for a whole family. Then French fried potatoes by the platterful. Then three fried eggs apiece. There was milk with cream on top to be poured from a big granite bucket as we desired it. There was a can of beans with tomato sauce. There was sweet apple-butter. There were canned apples. There was a pot of coffee. I moved over from the ice-chest and we talked and ate till half-past one. I began to feel that I was solid as an iron man and big as a Colossus of Rhodes. I would like to report our talk, but this letter must end somewhere. I agreed with my host's opinions on everything but the temperance question. He did not believe in _total_ abstinence. On that I remained noncommittal. Eating as I had, how could I take a stand against my benefactor even though the issue were the immortal one of man's sinful weakness for drink? The ham and ice water were going to my head as it was. And I could have eaten more. I could have eaten a fat Shetland pony.

My host explained that he also travelled at times, but did not carry poetry. He gave me much box-car learning. Then, curious to relate, he dug out maps and papers, and showed me how to take up a claim in Oregon, a thing I did not in the least desire to do. God bless him in basket and in store, afoot or at home.

This afternoon the ham kept on frying within me, not uncomfortably. I stopped and drank at every windmill. Now it is about four o'clock in the afternoon and I am in the shadow of one more. I have found a bottle which just fits my hip pocket which I have washed and will use as a canteen henceforth. When one knows he has his drink with him, he does not get so thirsty.

But I have put down little to show you the strange intoxication that has pervaded this whole day. The inebriating character of the air and the water and the intoxication that comes with the very sight of the wind-mills spinning alone, and the elation that comes with the companionship of the sun, and the gentleness of the occasional good Samaritans, are not easily conveyed in words. When one's spirit is just right for this sort of thing it all makes as good an Independence Day as folks are having anywhere in this United States, even at Ellinwood.

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 1912. In the office of the Ellinwood livery stable

in the morning.

Everyone came home drunk from the Dutch picnic last night. Ellinwood roared and Ellinwood snorted. I reached the place from the east just as the noisy revellers arrived from the south.

Ellinwood is an old German town full of bar-rooms, forced by the sentiment of the dry voters in surrounding territory to turn into restaurants, but only of late. The bar-fixtures are defiantly retained. Ever and anon Ellinwood takes to the woods with malicious intent.

Many of the citizens were in a mad-dog fury because Flynn had not licked Johnson. This town seems to be of the opinion that that battle was important. The proprietor of the most fashionable hotel monopolized the 'phone on his return from the woods. He called up everybody in town. His conversation was always the same. "What'd ya think of the fight?" And without waiting for answer: "I'll bet one hundred thousand dollars that Flynn can lick Johnson in a fair fight. It's a disgrace to this nation that black rascal kin lay hands on a white man. I'll bet a hundred thousand dollars.... A hundred thousand dollars ..." etc.

I sat a long time waiting for him to get through. At last I put in my petition at another hostelrie. This host was intoxicated, but gentle. In exchange for what I call the squarest kind of a meal I recited the most cooling verses I knew to a somewhat distracted, rather alcoholic company of harvest hands. First I recited a poem in praise of Lincoln and then one in praise of the uplifting influence of the village church. Then, amid qualified applause, I distributed my tracts, and retreated to this stable for the night.

## KANSAS

_O, I have walked in Kansas
Through many a harvest field
And piled the sheaves of glory there
And down the wild rows reeled:_

_Each sheaf a little yellow sun,
A heap of hot-rayed gold;
Each binder like Creation's hand
To mould suns, as of old._

_Straight overhead the orb of noon
Beat down with brimstone breath:
The desert wind from south and west
Was blistering flame and death._

_Yet it was gay in Kansas,
A-fighting that strong sun;
And I and many a fellow-tramp
Defied that wind and won._

_And we felt free in Kansas
From any sort of fear,
For thirty thousand tramps like us
There harvest every year._

_She stretches arms for them to come,
She roars for helpers then,
And so it is in Kansas
That tramps, one month, are men._

_We sang in burning Kansas
The songs of Sabbath-school,
The "Day Star" flashing in the East,
The "Vale of Eden" cool._

_We sang in splendid Kansas
"The flag that set us free"--
That march of fifty thousand men
With Sherman to the sea._

_We feasted high in Kansas
And had much milk and meat.
The tables groaned to give us power
Wherewith to save the wheat._

_Our beds were sweet alfalfa hay
Within the barn-loft wide.
The loft doors opened out upon
The endless wheat-field tide._

_I loved to watch the wind-mills spin
And watch that big moon rise.
I dreamed and dreamed with lids half-shut,
The moonlight in my eyes._

_For all men dream in Kansas
By noonday and by night,
By sunrise yellow, red and wild
And moonrise wild and white._

_The wind would drive the glittering clouds,
The cottonwoods would croon,
And past the sheaves and through the leaves

Came whispers from the moon._

## THE NEW POETRY MOVEMENT

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Prejudices, First Series* , by H. L. (Henry Louis) Mencken

The current pother about poetry, now gradually subsiding, seems to have begun about seven years ago—say in 1912. It was during that year that Harriet Monroe established _Poetry: A Magazine of Verse_, in Chicago, and ever since then she has been the mother superior of the movement. Other leaders have occasionally disputed her command—the bombastic Braithwaite, with his annual anthology of magazine verse; Amy Lowell, with her solemn pronunciamentos in the manner of a Harvard professor; Vachel Lindsay, with his nebulous vaporings and chautauqua posturings; even such cheap jacks as Alfred Kreymborg, out of Greenwich Village. But the importance of Miss Monroe grows more manifest as year chases year. She was, to begin with, clearly the pioneer. _Poetry_ was on the stands nearly two years before the first Braithwaite anthology, and long before Miss Lowell had been lured from her earlier finishing-school doggerels by the Franco-British Imagists. It antedated, too, all the other salient documents of the movement—Master's "Spoon River Anthology," Frost's "North of Boston," Lindsay's "General William Booth Enters Heaven," the historic bulls of the Imagists, the frantic balderdash of the "Others" group. Moreover, Miss Monroe has always managed to keep on good terms with all wings of the heaven-kissed host, and has thus managed to exert a ponderable influence both to starboard and to port. This, I daresay, is because she is a very intelligent woman, which fact is alone sufficient to give her an austere eminence in a movement so beset by mountebanks and their dupes. I have read _Poetry_ since the first number, and find it constantly entertaining. It has printed a great deal of extravagant stuff, and not a little downright nonsensical stuff, but in the main it has steered a safe and intelligible course, with no salient blunders. No other poetry magazine—and there have been dozens of them—has even remotely approached it in interest, or, for that matter, in genuine hospitality to ideas. Practically all of the others have been operated by passionate enthusiasts, often extremely ignorant and always narrow and humorless. But Miss Monroe has managed to retain a certain judicial calm in the midst of all the whooping and clapper-clawing, and so she has avoided running amuck, and her magazine has printed the very best of the new poetry and avoided much of the worst.

As I say, the movement shows signs of having spent its strength. The mere bulk of the verse that it produces is a great deal less than it was three or four years ago, or even one or two years ago, and there is a noticeable tendency toward the conservatism once so loftily disdained. I daresay the Knish-Morgan burlesque of Witter Bynner and Arthur Davison Ficke was a hard blow to the more fantastic radicals. At all events,

they subsided after it was perpetrated, and for a couple of years nothing has been heard from them. These radicals, chiefly collected in what was called the "Others" group, rattled the slapstick in a sort of side-show to the main exhibition. They attracted, of course, all the more credulous and uninformed partisans of the movement, and not a few advanced professors out of one-building universities began to lecture upon them before bucolic women's clubs. They committed hari-kari in the end by beginning to believe in their own buncombe. When their leaders took to the chautauquas and sought to convince the peasantry that James Whitcomb Riley was a fraud the time was ripe for the lethal buffoonery of MM. Bynner and Ficke. That buffoonery was enormously successful—perhaps the best hoax in American literary history. It was swallowed, indeed, by so many magnificoes that it made criticism very timorous thereafter, and so did damage to not a few quite honest bards. To-day a new poet, if he departs ever so little from the path already beaten, is kept in a sort of literary delousing pen until it is established that he is genuinely sincere, and not merely another Bynner in hempen whiskers and a cloak to go invisible.

Well, what is the net produce of the whole uproar? How much actual poetry have all these truculent rebels against Stedman's Anthology and McGuffey's Sixth Reader manufactured? I suppose I have read nearly all of it—a great deal of it, as a magazine editor, in manuscript—and yet, as I look back, my memory is lighted up by very few flashes of any lasting brilliance. The best of all the lutists of the new school, I am inclined to think, are Carl Sandburg and James Oppenheim, and particularly Sandburg. He shows a great deal of raucous crudity, he is often a bit uncertain and wobbly, and sometimes he is downright banal—but, taking one bard with another, he is probably the soundest and most intriguing of the lot. Compare, for example, his war poems—simple, eloquent and extraordinarily moving—to the humorless balderdash of Amy Lowell, or, to go outside the movement, to the childish gush of Joyce Kilmer, Hermann Hagedorn and Charles Hanson Towne. Often he gets memorable effects by astonishingly austere means, as in his famous "Chicago" rhapsody and his "Cool Tombs." And always he is thoroughly individual, a true original, his own man. Oppenheim, equally eloquent, is more conventional. He stands, as to one leg, on the shoulders of Walt Whitman, and, as to the other, on a stack of Old Testaments. The stuff he writes, despite his belief to the contrary, is not American at all; it is absolutely Jewish, Levantine, almost Asiatic. But here is something criticism too often forgets: the Jew, intrinsically, is the greatest of poets. Beside his gorgeous rhapsodies the highest flights of any western bard seem feeble and cerebral. Oppenheim, inhabiting a brick house in New York, manages to get that sonorous Eastern note into his dithyrambs. They are often inchoate and feverish, but at their best they have the gigantic gusto of Solomon's Song.

Miss Lowell is the schoolmarm of the movement, and vastly more the pedagogue than the artist. She has written perhaps half a dozen

excellent pieces in imitation of Richard Aldington and John Gould Fletcher, and a great deal of highfalutin bathos. Her "A Dome of Many-Colored Glass" is full of infantile poppycock, and though it is true that it was first printed in 1912, before she joined the Imagists, it is not to be forgotten that it was reprinted with her consent in 1915, after she had definitely set up shop as a foe of the _cliché_. Her celebrity, I fancy, is largely extra-poetical; if she were Miss Tilly Jones, of Fort Smith, Ark., there would be a great deal less rowing about her, and her successive masterpieces would be received less gravely. A literary craftsman in America, as I have already said once or twice, is never judged by his work alone. Miss Lowell has been helped very much by her excellent social position. The majority, and perhaps fully nine-tenths of the revolutionary poets are of no social position at all—newspaper reporters, Jews, foreigners of vague nationality, school teachers, lawyers, advertisement writers, itinerant lecturers, Greenwich Village posturers, and so on. I have a suspicion that it has subtly flattered such denizens of the _demi-monde_ to find the sister of a president of Harvard in their midst, and that their delight has materially corrupted their faculties. Miss Lowell's book of exposition, "Tendencies in Modern American Poetry," is commonplace to the last degree. Louis Untermeyer's "The New Era in American Poetry" is very much better. And so is Prof. Dr. John Livingston Lowes' "Convention and Revolt in Poetry."

As for Edgar Lee Masters, for a short season the undisputed Homer of the movement, I believe that he is already extinct. What made the fame of "The Spoon River Anthology" was not chiefly any great show of novelty in it, nor any extraordinary poignancy, nor any grim truthfulness unparalleled, but simply the public notion that it was improper. It fell upon the country at the height of the last sex wave—a wave eternally ebbing and flowing, now high, now low. It was read, not as work of art, but as document; its large circulation was undoubtedly mainly among persons to whom poetry _qua_ poetry was as sour a dose as symphonic music. To such persons, of course, it seemed something new under the sun. They were unacquainted with the verse of George Crabbe; they were quite innocent of E. A. Robinson and Robert Frost; they knew nothing of the _Ubi sunt_ formula; they had never heard of the Greek Anthology. The roar of his popular success won Masters' case with the critics. His undoubted merits in detail—his half-wistful cynicism, his capacity for evoking simple emotions, his deft skill at managing the puny difficulties of _vers libre_—were thereupon pumped up to such an extent that his defects were lost sight of. Those defects, however, shine blindingly in his later books. Without the advantage of content that went with the anthology, they reveal themselves as volumes of empty doggerel, with now and then a brief moment of illumination. It would be difficult, indeed, to find poetry that is, in essence, less poetical. Most of the pieces are actually tracts, and many of them are very bad tracts.

Lindsay? Alas, he has done his own burlesque. What was new in him, at the start, was an echo of the barbaric rhythms of the Jubilee Songs. But very soon the thing ceased to be a marvel, and of late his elephantine college yells have ceased to be amusing. His retirement to the chautauquas is self-criticism of uncommon penetration. Frost? A standard New England poet, with a few changes in phraseology, and the substitution of sour resignationism for sweet resignationism. Whittier without the whiskers. Robinson? Ditto, but with a politer bow. He has written sound poetry, but not much of it. The late Major-General Roosevelt ruined him by praising him, as he ruined Henry Bordeaux, Pastor Wagner, Francis Warrington Dawson and many another. Giovannitti? A forth-rate Sandburg. Ezra Pound? The American in headlong flight from America—to England, to Italy, to the Middle Ages, to ancient Greece, to Cathay and points East. Pound, it seems to me, is the most picturesque man in the whole movement—a professor turned fantee, Abelard in grand opera. His knowledge is abysmal; he has it readily on tap; moreover, he has a fine ear, and has written many an excellent verse. But now all the glow and gusto of the bard have been transformed into the rage of the pamphleteer: he drops the lute for the bayonet. One sympathizes with him in his choler. The stupidity he combats is actually almost unbearable. Every normal man must be tempted, at times, to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and begin slitting throats. But this business, alas, is fatal to the placid moods and fine other-worldliness of the poet. Pound gives a thrilling show, but—.... The remaining stars of the liberation need not detain us. They are the street-boys following the calliope. They have labored with diligence, but they have produced no poetry....

Miss Monroe, if she would write a book about it, would be the most competent historian of the movement, and perhaps also its keenest critic. She has seen it from the inside. She knows precisely what it is about. She is able, finally, to detach herself from its extravagances, and to estimate its opponents without bile. Her failure to do a volume about it leaves Untermeyer's "The New Era in American Poetry" the best in the field. Prof. Dr. Lowes' treatise is very much more thorough, but it has the defect of stopping with the fundamentals—it has too little to say about specific poets. Untermeyer discusses all of them, and then throws in a dozen or two orthodox bards, wholly untouched by Bolshevism, for good measure. His criticism is often trenchant and always very clear. He thinks he knows what he thinks he knows, and he states it with the utmost address—sometimes, indeed, as in the case of Pound, with a good deal more address than its essential accuracy deserves. But the messianic note that gets into the bulls and ukases of Pound himself, the profound solemnity of Miss Lowell, the windy chautauqua-like nothings of Lindsay, the contradictions of the Imagists, the puerilities of Kreymborg _et al_—all these things are happily absent. And so it is possible to follow him amiably even when he is palpably wrong.

That is not seldom. At the very start, for example, he permits himself a lot of highly dubious rumble-bumble about the "inherent Americanism" and

soaring democracy of the movement. “Once,” he says, “the most exclusive and aristocratic of the arts, appreciated and fostered only by little _salons_ and erudite groups, poetry has suddenly swung away from its self-imposed strictures and is expressing itself once more in terms of democracy.” Pondering excessively, I can think of nothing that would be more untrue than this. The fact is that the new poetry is neither American nor democratic. Despite its remote grounding on Whitman, it started, not in the United States at all, but in France, and its exotic color is still its most salient characteristic. Practically every one of its practitioners is palpably under some strong foreign influence, and most of them are no more Anglo-Saxon than a samovar or a toccata. The deliberate strangeness of Pound, his almost fanatical anti-Americanism, is a mere accentuation of what is in every other member of the fraternity. Many of them, like Frost, Fletcher, H. D. and Pound, have exiled themselves from the republic. Others, such as Oppenheim, Sandburg, Giovannitti, Benét and Untermeyer himself, are palpably Continental Europeans, often with Levantine traces. Yet others, such as Miss Lowell and Masters, are little more, at their best, than translators and adapters—from the French, from the Japanese, from the Greek. Even Lindsay, superficially the most national of them all, has also his exotic smear, as I have shown. Let Miss Lowell herself be a witness. “We shall see them,” she says at the opening of her essay on E. A. Robinson, “ceding more and more to the influence of other, alien, peoples....” A glance is sufficient to show the correctness of this observation. There is no more “inherent Americanism” in the new poetry than there is in the new American painting and music. It lies, in fact, quite outside the main stream of American culture.

Nor is it democratic, in any intelligible sense. The poetry of Whittier and Longfellow was democratic. It voiced the elemental emotions of the masses of the people; it was full of their simple, rubber-stamp ideas; they comprehended it and cherished it. And so with the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley, and with that of Walt Mason and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. But the new poetry, grounded firmly upon novelty of form and boldness of idea, is quite beyond their understanding. It seems to them to be idiotic, just as the poetry of Whitman seemed to them to be idiotic, and if they could summon up enough interest in it to examine it at length they would undoubtedly clamor for laws making the confection of it a felony. The mistake of Untermeyer, and of others who talk to the same effect, lies in confusing the beliefs of poets and the subject matter of their verse with its position in the national consciousness. Oppenheim, Sandburg and Lindsay are democrats, just as Whitman was a democrat, but their poetry is no more a democratic phenomenon than his was, or than, to go to music, Beethoven’s Eroica Symphony was. Many of the new poets, in truth, are ardent enemies of democracy, for example, Pound. Only one of them has ever actually sought to take his strophes to the vulgar. That one is Lindsay—and there is not the slightest doubt that the yokels welcomed him, not because they were interested in his poetry, but because it struck them as an amazing, and perhaps even a fascinatingly

obscene thing, for a sane man to go about the country on any such bizarre and undemocratic business.

No sound art, in fact, could possibly be democratic. Tolstoi wrote a whole book to prove the contrary, and only succeeded in making his case absurd. The only art that is capable of reaching the _Homo Boobus_ is art that is already debased and polluted—band music, official sculpture, Pears' Soap painting, the popular novel. What is honest and worthy of praise in the new poetry is Greek to the general. And, despite much nonsense, it seems to me that there is no little in it that is honest and worthy of praise. It has, for one thing, made an effective war upon the _cliché_, and so purged the verse of the nation of much of its old banality in subject and phrase. The elegant album pieces of Richard Henry Stoddard and Edmund Clarence Stedman are no longer in fashion—save, perhaps, among the democrats that Untermeyer mentions. And in the second place, it has substituted for this ancient conventionality an eager curiosity in life as men and women are actually living it—a spirit of daring experimentation that has made poetry vivid and full of human interest, as it was in the days of Elizabeth. The thing often passes into the grotesque, it is shot through and through with _héliogabalisme_, but at its high points it has achieved invaluable pioneering. A new poet, emerging out of the Baptist night of Peoria or Little Rock to-day, comes into an atmosphere charged with subtle electricities. There is a stimulating restlessness; ideas have a welcome; the art he aspires to is no longer a merely formal exercise, like practicing Czerny. When a Henry Van Dyke arises at some college banquet and begins to discharge an old-fashioned ode to _alma mater_ there is a definite snicker; it is almost as if he were to appear in Congress gaiters or a beaver hat. An audience for such things, of course, still exists. It is, no doubt, an enormously large audience. But it has changed a good deal qualitatively, if not quantitatively. The relatively civilized reader has been educated to something better. He has heard a music that has spoiled his ear for the old wheezing of the melodeon. He weeps no more over what wrung him yesteryear.

Unluckily, the new movement, in America even more than in England, France and Germany, suffers from a very crippling lack, and that is the lack of a genuinely first-rate poet. It has produced many talents, but it has yet to produce any genius, or even the shadow of genius. There has been a general lifting of the plain, but no vasty and melodramatic throwing up of new peaks. Worse still, it has had to face hard competition from without—that is, from poets who, while also emerged from platitude, have yet stood outside it, and perhaps in some doubt of it. Untermeyer discusses a number of such poets in his book. There is one of them, Lizette Woodworth Reese, who has written more sound poetry, more genuinely eloquent and beautiful poetry, than all the new poets put together—more than a whole posse of Masterses and Lindsays, more than a hundred Amy Lowells. And there are others, Neihardt and John McClure among them—particularly McClure. Untermeyer, usually anything but an

ass, once committed the unforgettable asininity of sneering at McClure. The blunder, I daresay, is already lamented; it is not embalmed in his book. But it will haunt him on Tyburn Hill. For this McClure, attempting the simplest thing in the simplest way, has done it almost superbly. He seems to be entirely without theories. There is no pedagogical passion in him. He is no reformer. But more than any of the reformers now or lately in the arena, he is a poet.

## THROUGH WESTERN NEW YORK IN THE MUD

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Two Thousand Miles On An Automobile
by Arthur Jerome Eddy

The afternoon was drawing to a close, the rain had partially subsided, but the trees were heavy with water, and the streets ran rivulets.

Prudence would seem to dictate remaining in Le Roy over-night, but, so far as roads are concerned, it is always better to start out in, or immediately after, a rain than to wait until the water has soaked in and made the mud deep. A heavy rain washes the surface off the roads; it is better not to give it time to penetrate; we therefore determined to start at once.

There was not a soul on the streets as we pulled out a few moments after five o'clock, and in the entire ride of some thirty miles we met scarcely more than three or four teams.

We took the road by Bergen rather than through Caledonia; both roads are good, but in very wet weather the road from Bergen to Rochester is apt to be better than that from Caledonia, as it is more sandy.

To Bergen, eight miles, we found hard gravel, with one steep hill to descend; from Bergen in, it was sandy, and after the rain, was six inches deep in places with soft mud.

It was slow progress and eight o'clock when we pulled into Rochester.

We were given rooms where all the noises of street and trolley could be heard to best advantage; sleep was a struggle, rest an impossibility.

Hotel construction has quite kept pace with the times, but hotel location is a tradition of the dark ages, when to catch patrons it

was necessary to get in their way.

At Syracuse the New York Central passes through the principal hotels,--the main tracks bisecting the dining-rooms, with side tracks down each corridor and a switch in each bed-room; but this is an extreme instance.

It was well enough in olden times to open taverns on the highways; an occasional coach would furnish the novelty and break the monotony, but people could sleep.

The erection of hotels in close proximity to railroad tracks, or upon the main thoroughfares of cities where stone or asphalt pavements resound to every hoof-fall, and where street cars go whirring and clanging by all night long, is something more than an anachronism; it is a fiendish disregard of human comfort.

Paradoxical as it may seem,--a pious but garrulous old gentleman was one time invited to lead in prayer; consenting, he approached the throne of grace with becoming humility, saying, "Paradoxical as it may seem, O Lord, it is nevertheless true," etc., the phrase is a good one, it lingers in the ear,--therefore, once more, --paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that those who go about all day in machines do not like to be disturbed by machines at night.

We soon learned to keep away from the cities at night. It is so much more delightful to stop in smaller towns and villages; your host is glad to see you; you are quite the guest of honor, perhaps the only guest; there is a place in the adjoining stable for the machine; the men are interested, and only too glad to care for it and help in the morning; the best the house affords is offered; as a rule the rooms are quite good, the beds clean, and nowadays many of these small hotels have rooms with baths; the table is plain; but while automobiling one soon comes to prefer plain country living.

In the larger cities it costs a fortune in tips before the machine and oneself are well housed; to enter Albany, Boston, or New York at night, find your hotel, find the automobile station, find your luggage, and find yourself, is a bore.

No one who has ever ridden day after day in the country cares anything about riding in cities; it is as artificial and monotonous as riding a hunter over pavements. If one could just approach a city at night, steal into it, enjoy its lights and shadows, its confusion and strange sounds, all in passing, and slip through without stopping long enough to feel the thrust of the reality, it would be delightful. But the charm disappears, the

dream is brought to earth, the vision becomes tinsel when you draw up in front of a big caravansary and a platoon of uniformed porters, bell-boys, and pages swoop down upon everything you have, including your pocket-book; then the Olympian clerk looks at you doubtfully, puzzled for the first time in his life, does not know whether you are a mill-hand from Pittsburgh who should be assigned a hall bed-room in the annex, or a millionaire from Newport who should be tendered the entire establishment on a silver platter.

The direct road from Rochester to Syracuse is by way of Pittsford, Palmyra, Newark, Lyons, Clyde, Port Byron, and Camillus, but it is neither so good nor so interesting as the old roads through Geneva and Auburn.

In going from Buffalo to Albany _via_ Syracuse, Rochester is to the north and some miles out of the way; unless one especially desires to visit the city, it is better to leave it to one side. Genesee Street out of Buffalo is Genesee Street into Syracuse and Utica; it is the old highway between Buffalo and Albany, and may be followed to-day from end to end.

Instead of turning to the northeast at Batavia and going through Newkirk, Byron, Bergen, North Chili, and Gates to Rochester, keep more directly east through Le Roy, Caledonia, Avon, and Canandaigua to Geneva; the towns are old, the hotels, most of them, good, the roads are generally gravel and the country interesting; it is old New York. No one driving through the State for pleasure would think of taking the direct road from Rochester to Syracuse; the beautiful portions of this western end of the State are to the south, in the Genesee and Wyoming Valleys, and through the lake region.

We left Rochester at ten o'clock, Saturday, the 24th, intending to go east by Egypt, Macedon, Palmyra,--the Oriental route, as my companion called it; but after leaving Pittsford we missed the road and lost ourselves among the hills, finding several grades so steep and soft that we both were obliged to dismount.

An old resident was decidedly of the opinion that the roads to the southeast were better than those to the northeast, and we turned from the Nile route towards Canandaigua.

Though the roads were decidedly better, in many places being well gravelled, the heavy rains of the previous two days made the going slow, and it was one-thirty before we pulled up at the old hotel in Canandaigua for dinner.

As the machine had been there before, we were greeted as friends. The old negro porter is a character,--quite the irresponsible head

of the entire establishment.

"Law's sakes! you heah agen? glad to see you; whar you come from dis time? Rochester! No, foh sure?--dis mawning?--you doan say so; that jes' beats me; to think I live to see a thing like that; it's a reg'lar steam-engine, aint it?"

"Sambo," called out a bystander, making fun of the old darkey, "do you know what you are looking at?"

"Well, if I doan, den I can't find out frum dis yere crowd."

"What do they call it, Sambo?" some one else asked.

"Sh-sh'h--that's a secret; an' if I shud tell you, you cudn't keep it."

"Is it yours?"

"I dun sole mine to Mistah Vand'bilt las' week; he name it de White Ghos'--after me."

"You mean the Black Devil."

"No, I doan; he didn't want to hu't youah feelings; Mistah Vand'bilt a very consid'rate man."

Sambo carried our things in, talking all the time.

"Now you jes' go right into dinnah; I'll take keer of the auto'bile; I'll see that nun of those ign'rant folk stannin' roun' lay their han's on it; they think Sambo doan know an auto'bile; didn't I see you heah befoh? an' didn't I hole de hose when you put de watah in? Me an' you are de only two pussons in dis whole town who knows about de auto'bile,--jes' me an' you."

After dinner we rode down the broad main street and around the lake to the left in going to Geneva. Barring the fact that the roads were soft in places, the afternoon's ride was delightful, the roads being generally very good.

It was about five o'clock when we came to the top of the hills overlooking Geneva and the silvery lake beyond. It was a sight not to be forgotten by the American traveller, for this country has few towns so happily situated as the village of Geneva,--a cluster of houses against a wooded slope with the lake like a mirror below.

The little hotel was almost new and very good; the rooms were

large and comfortable. There was but one objection, and that the location at the very corner of the busiest and noisiest streets. But Geneva goes to bed early,--even on Saturday nights,--and by ten or eleven o'clock the streets were quiet, while on Sunday mornings there is nothing to disturb one before the bells ring for church.

We were quite content to rest this first Sunday out.

It was so delightfully quiet all the morning that we lounged about and read until dinner-time. In the afternoon a walk, and in the evening friends came to supper with us. In a moment of ambitious emulation of metropolitan customs the small hotel had established a roof garden, with music two or three evenings a week, but the innovation had not proven profitable; the roof remained with some iron framework that once supported awnings, several disconsolate tables, and some lonesome iron chairs; we visited this scene of departed glory and obtained a view of the lake at evening.

The irregular outlines of the long shadows of the hills stretched far out over the still water; beyond these broken lines the slanting rays of the setting sun fell upon the surface of the lake, making it to shine like a mass of burnished silver.

Some white sails glimmered in the light far across; near by we caught the sound of church-bells; the twilight deepened, the shadows lengthened, the luminous stretch of water grew narrower and narrower until it disappeared entirely and all was dark upon the lake, save here and there the twinkle of lights from moving boats,--shifting stars in the void of night.

The morning was bright as we left Geneva, but the roads, until we struck the State road, were rough and still muddy from the recent rains.

It was but a short run to Auburn, and from there into Syracuse the road is a fine gravel.

The machine had developed a slight pounding and the rear-axle showed signs of again parting at the differential.

After luncheon the machine was run into a machine shop, and three hours were spent in taking up the lost motion in the eccentric strap, at the crank-pin, and in a loose bushing.

On opening up the differential gear case both set-screws holding the axles were found loose. The factory had been most emphatically requested to put in larger keys so as to fit the key-ways snugly and to lock these set-screws in some way--neither of these things

had been done; and both halves of the rear-axle were on the verge of working out.

Small holes were bored through the set-screws, wires passed through and around the shoulders of the gears, and we had no further trouble from this source.

It was half-past five before we left Syracuse for Oneida. The road is good, and the run of twenty-seven miles was made in little over two hours, arriving at the small, old-fashioned tavern in Oneida at exactly seven forty-five.

A number of old-timers dropped into the hotel office that evening to see what was going on and hear about the strange machine. Great stories were exchanged on all sides; the glories of Oneida quite eclipsed the lesser claims of the automobile to fame and notoriety, for it seemed that some of the best known men of New York and Chicago were born in the village or the immediate vicinity; the land-marks remain, traditions are intact, the men departed to seek their fortunes elsewhere, but their successes are the town's fame.

The genial proprietor of the hotel carried his seventy-odd years and two hundred and sixty pounds quite handily in his shirt-sleeves, moving with commendable celerity from office to bar-room, supplying us in the front room with information and those in the back with refreshment.

"So you never heard that those big men were born in this locality. That's strange; tho't ev'rybody knew that. Why 'Neida has produced more famous men than any town same size in 'Merika,--Russell Sage, General New,--comin'" (to those in the bar-room); "say, you fellers, can't you wait?" As he disappeared in the rear we heard his rotund voice, "What'll you take? Was jest tellin' that chap with the threshin'-machine a thing or two about this country. Rye? no, thet's Bourbon--the reel corn juice--ten years in wood--"

"Mixed across the street at the drug store--ha! ha! ha!" interrupted some one.

"Don't be faceshus, Sam; this ain't no sody-fountin."

"Where'd that feller cum frum with his steam pianer,--Syr'cuse?"

"Naw! Chicago."

"Great cranberries! you don't say so,--all the way from Chicago! When did he start?"

"Day 'fore yesterday," replied the old man, and we could hear him putting back the bottles; a chorus of voices,--

"What!"

"Holy Mo--"

"Day afore yester--say, look here, you're jokin'."

"Mebbe I am, but if you don't believe it, ask him."

"Why Chicago is further'n Buf'lo--an' that's faster'n a train."

"Yes," drawled the old man; "he passed the Empire Express th' other side Syr'cuse."

"Get out."

"What do you take us fer?"

"Wall, when you cum in, I took you fer fellers who knowed the diff'rence betwixt whiskey and benzine, but I see my mistake. You fellers shud buy your alc'hol across the way at the drug store; it don't cost s' much, and burns better."

"Thet's one on us. Your whiskey is all right, grandpa, the reel corn juice--ten year in wood--too long in bottl'spile if left over night, so pull the stopper once more."

## FANTASTIC LOLLYPOPS

The Project Gutenberg etext of *A Thousand and One Afternoons in Chicago*, by Ben Hecht

They will never start. No, they will never start. In another two minutes Mr. Prokofieff will go mad. They should have started at eleven. It is now ten minutes after eleven. And they have not yet started. Ah, Mr. Prokofieff has gone mad.

But Mr. Prokofieff is a modernist; so nobody pays much attention. Musicians are all mad. And a modernist musician, du lieber Gott! A Russian modernist musician!

The medieval face of Mr. Boris Anisfeld pops over the rows of empty seats. It is very likely that Mr. Anisfeld will also go mad. For Mr. Anisfeld is, in a way, a collaborator of Mr. Prokofieff. It is the full dress rehearsal of "The Love for Three Oranges." Mr. Prokofieff wrote the words and music. Mr. Anisfeld painted the scenery.

"Mees Garden weel be hear in a meenute," the medieval face of Boris whispers into the Muscovite ears of Serge.

* * * * *

Eleven-fifteen, and Miss Garden has arrived. She is armed, having brought along her heaviest shillalah. Mr. Prokofieff is on his feet. He takes off his coat. The medieval face of Mr. Anisfeld vanishes. Tap, tap, on the conductor's stand. Lights out. A fanfare from the orchestra's right.

Last rehearsal for the world premier of a modernist opera! One winter morning years ago the music critics of Paris sat and laughed themselves green in the face over the incomprehensible banalities of an impossible modernist opera called "Tannhaeuser." And who will say that critics have lost their sense of humor. There will unquestionably be laughter before this morning is over.

* * * * *

Music like this has never come from the orchestra pit of the Auditorium. Strange combinations of sounds that seem to come from street pianos, New Year's eve horns, harmonicas and old-fashioned musical beer steins that play when you lift them up. Mr. Prokofieff waves his shirt-sleeved arms and the sounds increase.

There is nothing difficult about this music--that is, unless you are unfortunate enough to be a music critic. But to the untutored ear there is a charming capriciousness about the sounds from the orchestra. Cadenzas pirouette in the treble. Largos toboggan in the bass. It sounds like the picture of a crazy Christmas tree drawn by a happy child. Which is a most peculiar way for music to sound.

But, attention! The curtain is up. Bottle greens and fantastic reds. Here is a scene as if the music Mr. Prokofieff were waving out of the orchestra had come to life. Lines that look like the music sounds. Colors that embrace one another in tender dissonances. Yes, like that.

And here, galubcheck (I think it's galubcheck), are the actors. What is it all about? Ah, Mr. Prokofieff knows and Boris knows and maybe the actors know. But all it is necessary for us to know is that music and color and a quaint, almost gargoylian, caprice are tumbling around in front of our eyes and ears.

And there is M. Jacques Coini. He will not participate in the world premier. Except in spirit. Now M. Coini is present in the flesh. He wears a business suit, spats of tan and a gray fedora. M. Coini is the stage director. He instructs the actors how to act. He tells the choruses where to chorus and what to do with their hands, masks, feet, voices, eyes and noses.

The hobgoblin extravaganza Mr. Prokofieff wrote unfolds itself with rapidity. Theater habitues eavesdropping on the rehearsal mumble in the half-dark that there was never anything like this seen on earth or in heaven. Mr. Anisfeld's scenery explodes like a succession of medieval skyrockets. A phantasmagoria of sound, color and action crowds the startled proscenium. For there is no question but that the proscenium, with the names of Verdi, Bach, Haydn and Beethoven chiseled on it, is considerably startled.

Through this business of skyrockets and crescendos and hobgoblins M. Coini stands out like a lighthouse in a cubist storm. However bewildering the plot, however humpty-dumpty the music, M. Coini is intelligible drama. His brisk little figure in its pressed pants, spats and fedora, bounces around amid the apoplectic disturbances like some busybody Alice in an operatic Wonderland.

The opus mounts. The music mounts. Singers attired as singers were never attired before crawl on, bounce on, tumble on. And M. Coini, as undisturbed as a traffic cop or a loop pigeon, commands his stage. He tells the singers where to stand while they sing, and when they don't sing to suit him he sings himself. He leads the chorus on and tells it where to dance, and when they don't dance to suit him he dances himself. He moves the scenery himself. He fights with Mr. Prokofieff while the music splashes and roars around him. He fights with Boris. He fights with electricians and wigmakers.

* * * * *

It is admirable. M. Coini, in his tan spats and gray fedora, is more fantastic than the entire cast of devils and Christmas trees and lollypops, who seem to be the leading actors in the play. Mr. Prokofieff and Miss Garden have made a mistake. They should have let M. Coini play "The Love for Three Oranges" all by himself. They should have let him be the dream-towers and the weird chorus, the enchantress and the melancholy prince. M. Coini is the greatest opera I have ever seen. All he needed was M. Prokofieff's music and the superbly childish visions of the medieval Boris for a background.

The music leaps into a gaudy balloon and sails away in marvelous zigzags, way over the heads of the hobgoblins on the stage and the music critics off the stage. Miss Garden beckons with her shillalah. Mr. Prokofieff arrives panting at her side. He bows, kisses the back of her hand and stands at attention. Also the medieval face of Mr. Anisfeld drifts gently through the gloom and joins the two.

The first act of "The Oranges" is over. Two critics exchanging opinions glower at Mr. Prokofieff. One says: "What a shame! What a shame! Nobody will understand it." The other agrees. But perhaps they only mean that

music critics will fail to understand it and that untutored ones like ourselves will find in the hurdy-gurdy rhythms and contortions of Mr. Prokofieff and Mr. Anisfeld a strange delight. As if some one had given us a musical lollypop to suck and rub in our hair.

*  *  *  *  *

I have an interview with Mr. Prokofieff to add. The interview came first and doesn't sit well at the end of these notes. Because Mr. Prokofieff, sighing a bit nervously in expectation of the world's premier, said: "I am a classicist. I derive from the classical composers."

This may be true, but the critics will question it. Instead of quoting Mr. Prokofieff at this time, it may be more apropos merely to say that I would rather see and listen to his opera than to the entire repertoire of the company put together. This is not criticism, but a prejudice in favor of fantastic lolly-pops.

THE AWAKENING OF THE NEGRO by Booker T. Washington
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, 1995, Memorial Issue*, by Various

When a mere boy, I saw a young colored man, who had spent several years in school, sitting in a common cabin in the South, studying a French grammar. I noted the poverty, the untidiness, the want of system and thrift, that existed about the cabin, notwithstanding his knowledge of French and other academic subjects. Another time, when riding on the outer edges of a town in the South, I heard the sound of a piano coming from a cabin of the same kind. Contriving some excuse, I entered, and began a conversation with the young colored woman who was playing, and who had recently returned from a boarding-school, where she had been studying instrumental music among other things. Despite the fact that her parents were living in a rented cabin, eating poorly cooked food, surrounded with poverty, and having almost none of the conveniences of life, she had persuaded them to rent a piano for four or five dollars per month. Many such instances as these, in connection with my own struggles, impressed upon me the importance of making a study of our needs as a race, and applying the remedy accordingly.

Some one may be tempted to ask, Has not the negro boy or girl as good a right to study a French grammar and instrumental music as the white youth? I answer, Yes, but in the present condition of the negro race in this country there is need of something more. Perhaps I may be forgiven for the seeming egotism if I mention the expansion of my own life partly as an example of what I mean. My earliest recollection is of a small one-room log hut on a large slave plantation in Virginia. After the

close of the war, while working in the coal-mines of West Virginia for the support of my mother, I heart in some accidental way of the Hampton Institute. When I learned that it was an institution where a black boy could study, could have a chance to work for his board, and at the same time be taught how to work and to realize the dignity of labor, I resolved to go there. Bidding my mother good-by, I started out one morning to find my way to Hampton, though I was almost penniless and had no definite idea where Hampton was. By walking, begging rides, and paying for a portion of the journey on the steam-cars, I finally succeeded in reaching the city of Richmond, Virginia. I was without money or friends. I slept under a sidewalk, and by working on a vessel next day I earned money to continue my way to the institute, where I arrived with a surplus of fifty cents. At Hampton I found the opportunity--in the way of buildings, teachers, and industries provided by the generous--to get training in the class-room and by practical touch with industrial life, to learn thrift, economy, and push. I was surrounded by an atmosphere of business, Christian influence, and a spirit of self-help that seemed to have awakened every faculty in me, and caused me for the first time to realize what it meant to be a man instead of a piece of property.

While there I resolved that when I had finished the course of training I would go into the far South, into the Black Belt of the South, and give my life to providing the same kind of opportunity for self-reliance and self-awakening that I had found provided for me at Hampton. My work began at Tuskegee, Alabama, in 1881, in a small shanty and church, with one teacher and thirty students, without a dollar's worth of property. The spirit of work and of industrial thrift, with aid from the State and generosity from the North, has enabled us to develop an institution of eight hundred students gathered from nineteen States, with seventy-nine instructors, fourteen hundred acres of land, and thirty buildings, including large and small; in all, property valued at $280,000. Twenty-five industries have been organized, and the whole work is carried on at an annual cost of about $80,000 in cash; two fifths of the annual expense so far has gone into permanent plant.

What is the object of all this outlay? First, it must be borne in mind that we have in the South a peculiar and unprecedented state of things. It is of the utmost importance that our energy be given to meeting conditions that exist right about us rather than conditions that existed centuries ago or that exist in countries a thousand miles away. What are the cardinal needs among the seven millions of colored people in the South, most of whom are to be found on the plantations? Roughly, these needs may be stated as food, clothing, shelter, education, proper habits, and a settlement of race relations. The seven millions of colored people of the South cannot be reached directly by any missionary agency, but they can be reached by sending out among them strong selected young men and women, with the proper training of head, hand, and heart, who will live among these masses and show them how to lift

themselves up.

The problem that the Tuskegee Institute keeps before itself constantly is how to prepare these leaders. From the outset, in connection with religious and academic training, it has emphasized industrial or hand training as a means of finding the way out of present conditions. First, we have found the industrial teaching useful in giving the student a chance to work out a portion of his expenses while in school. Second, the school furnishes labor that has an economic value, and at the same time gives the student a chance to acquire knowledge and skill while performing the labor. Most of all, we find the industrial system valuable in teaching economy, thrift, and the dignity of labor, and in giving moral backbone to students. The fact that a student goes out into the world conscious of his power to build a house or a wagon, or to make a harness, gives him a certain confidence and moral independence that he would not possess without such training.

A more detailed example of our methods at Tuskegee may be of interest. For example, we cultivate by student labor six hundred and fifty acres of land. The object is not only to cultivate the land in a way to make it pay our boarding department, but at the same time to teach the students, in addition to the practical work, something of the chemistry of the soil, the best methods of drainage, dairying, the cultivation of fruit, the care of livestock and tools, and scores of other lessons needed by a people whose main dependence is on agriculture. Notwithstanding that eighty-five per cent of the colored people in the South live by agriculture in some form, aside from what has been done by Hampton, Tuskegee, and one or two other institutions practically nothing has been attempted in the direction of teaching them about the very industry from which the masses of our people must get their subsistence. Friends have recently provided means for the erection of a large new chapel at Tuskegee. Our students have made the bricks for this chapel. A large part of the timber is sawed by students at our own sawmill, the plans are drawn by our teacher of architecture and mechanical drawing, and students do the brick-masonry, plastering, painting, carpentry work, tinning, slating, and make most of the furniture. Practically, the whole chapel will be built and furnished by student labor; in the end the school will have the building for permanent use, and the students will have a knowledge of the trades employed in its construction. In this way all but three of the thirty buildings on the grounds have been erected. While the young men do the kinds of work I have mentioned, the young women to a large extent make, mend, and launder the clothing of the young men, and thus are taught important industries.

One of the objections sometimes urged against industrial education for the negro is that it aims merely to teach him to work on the same plan that he was made to follow when in slavery. This is far from being the object at Tuskegee. At the head of each of the twenty-five industrial departments we have an intelligent and competent instructor, just as

we have in our history classes, so that the student is taught not only practical brick-masonry, for example, but also the underlying principles of that industry, the mathematics and the mechanical and architectural drawing. Or he is taught how to become master of the forces of nature so that, instead of cultivating corn in the old way, he can use a corn cultivator, that lays off the furrows, drops the corn into them, and covers it, and in this way he can do more work than three men by the old process of corn-planting; at the same time much of the toil is eliminated and labor is dignified. In a word, the constant aim is to show the student how to put brains into every process of labor; how to bring his knowledge of mathematics and the sciences into farming, carpentry, forging, foundry work; how to dispense as soon as possible with the old form of ante-bellum labor. In the erection of the chapel just referred to, instead of letting the money which was given us go into outside hands, we make it accomplish three objects: first, it provides the chapel; second, it gives the students a chance to get a practical knowledge of the trades connected with building; and third, it enables them to earn something toward the payment of board while receiving academic and industrial training.

Having been fortified at Tuskegee by education of mind, skill of hand, Christian character, ideas of thrift, economy, and push, and a spirit of independence, the student is sent out to become a centre of influence and light in showing the masses of our people in the Black Belt of the South how to lift themselves up. How can this be done? I give but one or two examples. Ten years ago a young colored man came to the institute from one of the large plantation districts; he studied in the class-room a portion of the time, and received practical and theoretical training on the farm the remainder of the time. Having finished his course at Tuskegee, he returned to his plantation home, which was in a county where the colored people outnumber the whites six to one, as is true of many of the counties in the Black Belt of the South. He found the negroes in debt. Ever since the war they had been mortgaging their crops for the food on which to live while the crops were growing. The majority of them were living from hand to mouth on rented land, in small, one-room log cabins, and attempting to pay a rate of interest on their advances that ranged from fifteen to forty per cent per annum. The school had been taught in a wreck of a log cabin, with no apparatus, and had never been in session longer than three months out of twelve. With as many as eight or ten persons of all ages and conditions and of both sexes huddled together in one cabin year after year, and with a minister whose only aim was to work upon the emotions of the people, one can imagine something of the moral and religious state of the community.

But the remedy. In spite of the evil, the negro got the habit of work from slavery. The rank and file of the race, especially those on the Southern plantations, work hard, but the trouble is, what they earn gets away from them in high rents, crop mortgages, whiskey, snuff, cheap jewelry, and the like. The young man just referred to had been trained

at Tuskegee, as most of our graduates are, to meet just this condition of things. He took the three months' public school as a nucleus for his work. Then he organized the older people into a club, or conference, that held meetings every week. In these meetings he taught the people in a plain, simple manner how to save their money, how to farm in a better way, how to sacrifice,--to live on bread and potatoes, if need be, till they could get out of debt, and begin the buying of lands.

Soon a large proportion of the people were in condition to make contracts for the buying of homes (land is very cheap in the South), and to live without mortgaging their crops. Not only this: under the guidance and leadership of this teacher, the first year that he was among them they learned how, by contributions in money and labor, to build a neat, comfortable schoolhouse that replaced the wreck of a log cabin formerly used. The following year the weekly meetings were continued, and two months were added to the original three months of school. The next year two more months were added. The improvement has gone on, until now these people have every year an eight months' school.

I wish my readers could have the chance that I have had of going into this community. I wish they could look into the faces of the people and see them beaming with hope and delight. I wish they could see the two or three room cottages that have taken the place of the usual one-room cabin, the well-cultivated farms, and the religious life of the people that now means something more than the name. The teacher has a good cottage and a well-kept farm that serve as models. In a word, a complete revolution has been wrought in the industrial, educational, and religious life of this whole community by reason of the fact that they have had this leader, this guide and object-lesson, to show them how to take the money and effort that had hitherto been scattered to the wind in mortgages and high rents, in whiskey and gewgaws, and concentrate them in the direction of their own uplifting. One community on its feet presents an object-lesson for the adjoining communities, and soon improvements show themselves in other places.

Another student who received academic and industrial training at Tuskegee established himself, three years ago, as a blacksmith and wheelwright in a community, and, in addition to the influence of his successful business enterprise, he is fast making the same kind of changes in the life of the people about him that I have just recounted. It would be easy for me to fill many pages describing the influence of the Tuskegee graduates in every part of the South. We keep it constantly in the minds of our students and graduates that the industrial or material condition of the masses of our people must be improved, as well as the intellectual, before there can be any permanent change in their moral and religious life. We find it a pretty hard thing to make a good Christian of a hungry man. No matter how much our people "get happy" and "shout" in church, if they go home at night from church hungry, they are tempted to find something before morning. This is a principle of human

nature, and is not confined to the negro.

The negro has within him immense power for self-uplifting, but for years it will be necessary to guide and stimulate him. The recognition of this power led us to organize, five years ago, what is now known as the Tuskegee Negro Conference,--a gathering that meets every February, and is composed of about eight hundred representative colored men and women from all sections of the Black Belt. They come in ox-carts, mule-carts, buggies, on muleback and horseback, on foot, by railroad: some traveling all night in order to be present. The matters considered at the conferences are those that the colored people have it within their own power to control: such as the evils of the mortgage system, the one-room cabin, buying on credit, the importance of owning a home and of putting money in the bank, how to build schoolhouses and prolong the school term, and how to improve their moral and religious condition.

As a single example of the results, one delegate reported that since the conferences were started five years ago eleven people in his neighborhood had bought homes, fourteen had got out of debt, and a number had stopped mortgaging their crops. Moreover, a schoolhouse had been built by the people themselves, and the school term had been extended from three to six months; and with a look of triumph he exclaimed, "We is done stopped libin' in de ashes!"

Besides this Negro Conference for the masses of the people, we now have a gathering at the same time known as the Workers' Conference, composed of the officers and instructors in the leading colored schools of the South. After listening to the story of the conditions and needs from the people themselves, the Workers' Conference finds much food for thought and discussion.

Nothing else so soon brings about right relations between the two races in the South as the industrial progress of the negro. Friction between the races will pass away in proportion as the black man, by reason of his skill, intelligence, and character, can produce something that the white man wants or respects in the commercial world. This is another reason why at Tuskegee we push the industrial training. We find that as every year we put into a Southern community colored men who can start a brick-yard, a sawmill, a tin-shop, or a printing-office,--men who produce something that makes the white man partly dependent upon the negro, instead of all the dependence being on the other side,--a change takes place in the relations of the races.

Let us go on for a few more years knitting our business and industrial relations into those of the white man, till a black man gets a mortgage on a white man's house that he can foreclose at will. The white man on whose house the mortgage rests will not try to prevent that negro from voting when he goes to the polls. It is through the dairy farm, the truck garden, the trades, and commercial life, largely, that the negro

is to find his way to the enjoyment of all his rights. Whether he will or not, a white man respects a negro who owns a two-story brick house.

What is the permanent value of the Tuskegee system of training to the South in a broader sense? In connection with this, it is well to bear in mind that slavery taught the white man that labor with the hands was something fit for the negro only, and something for the white man to come into contact with just as little as possible. It is true that there was a large class of poor white people who labored with the hands, but they did it because they were not able to secure negroes to work for them; and these poor whites were constantly trying to imitate the slave-holding class in escaping labor, and they too regarded it as anything but elevating. The negro in turn looked down upon the poor whites with a certain contempt because they had to work. The negro, it is to be borne in mind, worked under constant protest, because he felt that his labor was being unjustly required, and he spent almost as much effort in planning how to escape work as in learning how to work. Labor with him was a badge of degradation. The white man was held up before him as the highest type of civilization, but the negro noted that this highest type of civilization himself did no labor; hence he argued that the less work he did, the more nearly he would be like a white man. Then, in addition to these influences, the slave system discouraged labor-saving machinery. To use labor-saving machinery intelligence was required, and intelligence and slavery were not on friendly terms; hence the negro always associated labor with toil, drudgery, something to be escaped. When the negro first became free, his idea of education was that it was something that would soon put him in the same position as regards work that his recent master had occupied. Out of these conditions grew the Southern habit of putting off till to-morrow and the day after the duty that should be done promptly to-day. The leaky house was not repaired while the sun shone, for then the rain did not come through. While the rain was falling, no one cared to expose himself to stop the leak. The plough, on the same principle, was left where the last furrow was run, to rot and rust in the field during the winter. There was no need to repair the wooden chimney that was exposed to the fire, because water could be thrown on it when it was on fire. There was no need to trouble about the payment of a debt to-day, for it could just as well be paid next week or next year. Besides these conditions, the whole South, at the close of the war, was without proper food, clothing, and shelter,--was in need of habits of thrift and economy and of something laid up for a rainy day.

To me it seemed perfectly plain that here was a condition of things that could not be met by the ordinary process of education. At Tuskegee we became convinced that the thing to do was to make a careful systematic study of the condition and needs of the South, especially the Black Belt, and to bend our efforts in the direction of meeting these needs, whether we were following a well-beaten track, or were hewing out a new path to meet conditions probably without a parallel in the world.

After fourteen years of experience and observation, what is the result? Gradually but surely, we find that all through the South the disposition to look upon labor as a disgrace is on the wane, and the parents who themselves sought to escape work are so anxious to give their children training in intelligent labor that every institution which gives training in the handicrafts is crowded, and many (among them Tuskegee) have to refuse admission to hundreds of applicants. The influence of the Tuskegee system is shown again by the fact that almost every little school at the remotest cross-roads is anxious to be known as an industrial school, or, as some of the colored people call it, an "industrus" school.

The social lines that were once sharply drawn between those who labored with the hand and those who did not are disappearing. Those who formerly sought to escape labor, now when they see that brains and skill rob labor of the toil and drudgery once associated with it, instead of trying to avoid it are willing to pay to be taught how to engage in it. The South is beginning to see labor raised up, dignified and beautified, and in this sees its salvation. In proportion as the love of labor grows, the large idle class which has long been one of the curses of the South disappears. As its members become absorbed in occupations, they have less time to attend to everybody else's business, and more time for their own.

The South is still an undeveloped and unsettled country, and for the next half century and more the greater part of the energy of the masses will be needed to develop its material opportunities. Any force that brings the rank and file of the people to a greater love of industry is therefore especially valuable. This result industrial education is surely bringing about. It stimulates production and increases trade,--trade between the races,--and in this new and engrossing relation both forget the past. The white man respects the vote of the colored man who does $10,000 worth of business, and the more business the colored man has, the more careful he is how he votes.

Immediately after the war, there was a large class of Southern people who feared that the opening of the free schools to the freedmen and the poor whites--the education of the head alone--would result merely in increasing the class who sought to escape labor, and that the South would soon be overrun by the idle and vicious. But as the results of industrial combined with academic training begin to show themselves in hundreds of communities that have been lifted up through the medium of the Tuskegee system, these former prejudices against education are being removed. Many of those who a few years ago opposed general education are now among its warmest advocates.

This industrial training, emphasizing as it does the idea of economic production, is gradually bringing the South to the point where it is feeding itself. Before the war, and long after it, the South made what

little profit was received from the cotton crop, and sent its earnings out of the South to purchase food supplies,--meat, bread, canned vegetables, and the like; but the improved methods of agriculture are fast changing this habit. With the newer methods of labor, which teach promptness and system, and emphasize the worth of the beautiful,--the moral value of the well-painted house, and the fence with every paling and nail in its place,--we are bringing to bear upon the South an influence that is making it a new country in industry, education, and religion.

PLURALITY OF WIVES.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Social Life of the Blackfoot Indians*, by Clark Wissler

There were no restrictions as to the number of women taken to wife, but no woman could have more than one husband. Economic conditions, however, were unfavorable to a household of many wives, so that many men kept but a single wife and very few indeed ventured to support as many as five. On the other hand, a man of importance was expected to have two or more wives, suggesting wealth and resourcefulness. Plural wives speak of themselves as niskas (married to the same man) or, if of considerable difference in age, as elder and younger sisters. In the normal order of events, the first wife is the real, or head wife (she who sits beside him). A man may depose the head wife and confer the right upon another; but such was regarded as unusual, except where the provocation was great. When he went upon a journey, the head wife alone usually accompanied him. In the transfer of medicines, she took the woman's part and afterwards cared for the bundle. It seems that in this function, at least, she was secure from the whims of her husband. Again, there is the belief that the marriage obligations demanded more of her; the other wives, especially if young, were generally assumed to have lovers among the young men even though such was formally forbidden.

It is said, that sometimes the intimate friends of a young man about to marry would ask for the loan of his wife after marrying, but that in such cases the wife rarely yielded to his requests as she was always upheld in an appeal to his or her relatives. In the absence of other data, it is not safe to consider this a survival of former practices. However, it should be considered a possible phase of the distant-wife relations.

POTENTIAL WIVES.

The sisters of a wife are spoken of as "distant-wives" and may be, in a

way, potential wives, though it is not clear that there was any obligation involved when plural marriages were permitted. If a man proved to be a good husband, it is said, he might be given the "distant-wives" in turn, but there was no compulsion. The marriage of sisters was justified on practical grounds, they being more likely to live together in harmony. If there was a twin brother, the distant-wife relationship applied to him also; if not an actual twin but an inseparable companion (nitâks ok kowŏmmaul) the same term would apply, though in these cases to a less degree.

There is, however, a curious social custom still in force by which a man and his distant-wives are expected, on meeting, to engage in bold and obscene jests concerning sexual matters. This is often carried to a degree beyond belief. Thus, there is not only the same freedom here as between man and wife, but the conventional necessity for license. As practically all other relatives by marriage are forbidden the least reference to such subjects, the force of the exception is greatly magnified. For example, a man will not even relate the obscene tales of the Old Man and other tales containing such reference in the presence of his brothers-in-law nor before their immediate relatives. If we add to this an equal prohibition against the presence of his sisters and female cousins, we have marked out the limits of this taboo. Thus, it appears that with respect to this taboo, the distant-wives are placed in an exaggerated sense in the category of real wives. Other familiarities of a man with his distant-wives are strictly improper.

## THE MOTHER-IN-LAW TABOO.

The preceding may be a phase of the well-known mother-in-law taboo. Among the Blackfoot, still, a man should not speak to his mother-in-law, or even look at her. The taboo is equally binding upon her. If one is discovered about to enter the tipi where the other is present, someone gives warning in time to avoid the breach. Should the son-in-law enter, he must make her a present to mitigate her shame; should the mother-in-law offend, she must also make a small return. However, as usual with such taboos, there are ways of adjusting this restriction when necessary. If the son-in-law is ill, she may, in case of need, care for him and speak to him; upon his recovery the taboo is considered as permanently removed. Each may call on the other when in great danger, after which they need not be ashamed to meet. Sometimes when a man went out to war or was missing, his mother-in-law would register a vow that if he returned alive, she would shake hands with him and give him a horse and feel no more shame at meeting. The son-in-law may remove the taboo by presenting a few captured guns or horses. Some informants claim that four such presentations were necessary, after which his

mother-in-law would take him by the hand and thus remove the taboo. She may receive support from her son-in-law but, even with the taboo removed, must not live in the same tipi with him, a small one being set up outside. It is observable that the presents for removing the taboo bear some analogy to those made the father-in-law during the first months of married life and may be genetically related to that practice.[21]

The counterpart of this taboo does not prevail, since a man need not avoid his daughter-in-law, his association with her being governed by the conventions applying to his own daughters. Yet, it is not looked upon as quite right for a man to spend too much time at the home of his son. On the other hand, for a man to live with his father-in-law, or spend a great deal of his time there, excites ridicule.

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[21] Among the Mandan, we are told, "the mother-in-law never speaks to her son-in-law; but if he comes home, and brings her the scalp of a slain enemy, and his gun, she is at liberty, from that moment, to converse with him."—Maximilian, Vol. 23, 283. Among the Assiniboine the father-in-law taboo may be so removed.—Lowie, (a), 41. For the Cree we may add:—"Amongst our visitors was the son-in-law of the chief; and, according to Indian custom, he took his seat with his back towards his father and mother-in-law, never addressing them but through the medium of a third party, and they preserving the same etiquette towards him. This rule is not broken through until the son-in-law proves himself worthy of personally speaking to him, by having killed an enemy with white hairs; they then become entitled to wear a dress trimmed with human hair, taken from the scalps of their foes." Kane, 393.

## DIVORCE.

The chief grounds for divorce from the man's point of view, are laziness and adultery. For these or any other causes he may turn his wife out of doors. The woman then returns to her relatives where she is cared for and protected until another marriage can be arranged. The husband usually demands a return for the property he gave for her at marriage; he is sure to do this if she marries again. From the woman's point of view, adultery does not justify divorce, but neglect and cruelty may result in abandonment. She flees to her relatives where she is safe from attack. The husband's family then opens negotiations with her relatives and an attempt at adjustment is made. The woman's family usually agrees to another trial, but may finally decide to find her another husband. Then her husband demands a settlement and is entitled to equivalent

return for what he gave at marriage. Thus, formal divorce is really a restitution of the husband's marriage gifts, or a refund of the purchase price.

In general, divorce seems not to have been common as it was looked upon as disgraceful under all circumstances and grievously expensive. The behavior of the husband was softened by his knowing that in case of continued discord his wife's relatives were certain to interfere except she were charged with adultery and even in that event would retaliate if the accusation was manifestly unjust.

When the husband dies, the wife usually returns to her relatives who again arrange for her marriage.

HOW THE WILD APPLE GROWS.
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Wild Apples,* by Henry David Thoreau

But though these are indigenous, like the Indians, I doubt whether they are any hardier than those back-woodsmen among the apple-trees, which, though descended from cultivated stocks, plant themselves in distant fields and forests, where the soil is favorable to them. I know of no trees which have more difficulties to contend with, and which more sturdily resist their foes. These are the ones whose story we have to tell. It oftentimes reads thus:--

Near the beginning of May, we notice little thickets of apple-trees just springing up in the pastures where cattle have been,--as the rocky ones of our Easter-brooks Country, or the top of Nobscot Hill in Sudbury. One or two of these perhaps survive the drought and other accidents,--their very birthplace defending them against the encroaching grass and some other dangers, at first.

In two years' time 't had thus
Reached the level of the rocks,
Admired the stretching world,
Nor feared the wandering flocks.

But at this tender age
Its sufferings began:
There came a browsing ox
And cut it down a span.

This time, perhaps, the ox does not notice it amid the grass; but the next year, when it has grown more stout, he recognizes it for a fellow-emigrant from the old country, the flavor of whose leaves and twigs he well knows; and though at first he pauses to welcome it, and

express his surprise, and gets for answer, "The same cause that brought you here brought me," he nevertheless browses it again, reflecting, it may be, that he has some title to it.

Thus cut down annually, it does not despair; but, putting forth two short twigs for every one cut off, it spreads out low along the ground in the hollows or between the rocks, growing more stout and scrubby, until it forms, not a tree as yet, but a little pyramidal, stiff, twiggy mass, almost as solid and impenetrable as a rock. Some of the densest and most impenetrable clumps of bushes that I have ever seen, as well, on account of the closeness and stubbornness of their branches as of their thorns, have been these wild-apple scrubs. They are more like the scrubby fir and black spruce on which you stand, and sometimes walk, on the tops of mountains, where cold is the demon they contend with, than anything else. No wonder they are prompted to grow thorns at last, to defend themselves against such foes. In their thorniness, however, there is no malice, only some malic acid.

The rocky pastures of the tract I have referred to--for they maintain their ground best in a rocky field--are thickly sprinkled with these little tufts, reminding you often of some rigid gray mosses or lichens, and you see thousands of little trees just springing up between them, with the seed still attached to them.

Being regularly clipped all around each year by the cows, as a hedge with shears, they are often of a perfect conical or pyramidal form, from one to four feet high, and more or less sharp, as if trimmed by the gardener's art. In the pastures on Nobscot Hill and its spurs they make fine dark shadows when the sun is low. They are also an excellent covert from hawks for many small birds that roost and build in them. Whole flocks perch in them at night, and I have seen three robins' nests in one which was six feet in diameter.

No doubt many of these are already old trees, if you reckon from the day they were planted, but infants still when you consider their development and the long life before them. I counted the annual rings of some which were just one foot high, and as wide as high, and found that they were about twelve years old, but quite sound and thrifty! They were so low that they were unnoticed by the walker, while many of their contemporaries from the nurseries were already bearing considerable crops. But what you gain in time is perhaps in this case, too, lost in power,--that is, in the vigor of the tree. This is their pyramidal state.

The cows continue to browse them thus for twenty years or more, keeping them down and compelling them to spread, until at last they are so broad that they become their own fence, when some interior shoot, which their foes cannot reach, darts upward with joy: for it has not forgotten its high calling, and bears its own peculiar fruit in triumph.

Such are the tactics by which it finally defeats its bovine foes. Now, if you have watched the progress of a particular shrub, you will see that it is no longer a simple pyramid or cone, but out of its apex there rises a sprig or two, growing more lustily perchance than an orchard-tree, since the plant now devotes the whole of its repressed energy to these upright parts. In a short time these become a small tree, an inverted pyramid resting on the apex of the other, so that the whole has now the form of a vast hour-glass. The spreading bottom, having served its purpose, finally disappears, and the generous tree permits the now harmless cows to come in and stand in its shade, and rub against and redden its trunk, which has grown in spite of them, and even to taste a part of its fruit, and so disperse the seed.

Thus the cows create their own shade and food; and the tree, its hour-glass being inverted, lives a second life, as it were.

It is an important question with some nowadays, whether you should trim young apple-trees as high as your nose or as high as your eyes. The ox trims them up as high as he can reach, and that is about the right height, I think.

In spite of wandering kine and other adverse circumstance, that despised shrub, valued only by small birds as a covert and shelter from hawks, has its blossom-week at last, and in course of time its harvest, sincere, though small.

By the end of some October, when its leaves have fallen, I frequently see such a central sprig, whose progress I have watched, when I thought it had forgotten its destiny, as I had, bearing its first crop of small green or yellow or rosy fruit, which the cows cannot get at over the bushy and thorny hedge which surrounds it; and I make haste to taste the new and undescribed variety. We have all heard of the numerous varieties of fruit invented by Van Mons[9] and Knight.[10] This is the system of Van Cow, and she has invented far more and more memorable varieties than both of them.

[9] A Belgian chemist and horticulturist.

[10] An English vegetable physiologist.

Through what hardships it may attain to bear a sweet fruit! Though somewhat small, it may prove equal, if not superior, in flavor to that which has grown in a garden,--will perchance be all the sweeter and more palatable for the very difficulties it has had to contend with. Who knows but this chance wild fruit, planted by a cow or a bird on some remote and rocky hillside, where it is as yet unobserved by man, may be the choicest of all its kind, and foreign potentates shall hear of it, and royal societies seek to propagate it, though the virtues of

the perhaps truly crabbed owner of the soil may never be heard of,--at least, beyond the limits of his village? It was thus the Porter and the Baldwin grew.

Every wild-apple shrub excites our expectation thus, somewhat as every wild child. It is, perhaps, a prince in disguise. What a lesson to man! So are human beings, referred to the highest standard, the celestial fruit which they suggest and aspire to bear, browsed on by fate; and only the most persistent and strongest genius defends itself and prevails, sends a tender scion upward at last, and drops its perfect fruit on the ungrateful earth. Poets and philosophers and statesmen thus spring up in the country pastures, and outlast the hosts of unoriginal men.

Such is always the pursuit of knowledge. The celestial fruits, the golden apples of the Hesperides, are ever guarded by a hundred-headed dragon which never sleeps, so that it is an herculean labor to pluck them.

This is one and the most remarkable way in which the wild apple is propagated; but commonly it springs up at wide intervals in woods and swamps, and by the sides of roads, as the soil may suit it, and grows with comparative rapidity. Those which grow in dense woods are very tall and slender. I frequently pluck from these trees a perfectly mild and tamed fruit. As Palladius says, "And the ground is strewn with the fruit of an unbidden apple-tree."

It is an old notion, that, if these wild trees do not bear a valuable fruit of their own, they are the best stocks by which to transmit to posterity the most highly prized qualities of others. However, I am not in search of stocks, but the wild fruit itself, whose fierce gust has suffered no "inteneration." It is not my

"highest plot
To plant the Bergamot."

PREFACE
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Florida Salads*, by Frances Barber Harris

If the writer can impress upon the readers of this little salad book the importance of eating salads, the writing of it will not be in vain.

The addition of a pretty salad to a menu not only gives a refined, attractive appearance to the table, but is appetizing, and, I might say, almost a necessity in this climate, speaking from a health standpoint. Fruits and vegetables contain a large amount of the necessary salts

required by the system, and as for olive oil, the many benefits derived from the use of pure olive oil are so great that it is considered by good authority a positive beautifier. We all know that celery and onions are soothing to the nerves.

This is not a very comprehensive work, but a collection of a few practical, palatable recipes, combined, proportioned and tested by the author. It is especially written with the hope that it will be of some assistance to young housekeepers in making their meals attractive and dainty. With a few exceptions, the materials used in these salads are produced in Florida.

In making salads there is a field for a great deal of originality. With a little taste and painstaking care, most attractive, and at the same time wholesome dishes may be originated.

Important Pointers.

Of course only the freshest and best materials are reckoned in these recipes. It is a mistake to think the mixing will hide the quality.

Lettuce, endive, celery, and all salad greens should be most carefully washed, crisped one hour in ice water, put into a cheese cloth bag and kept near the ice until needed; or, shake gently, put into a covered stone jar and set in cool place. Cover jar with cloth before putting on the top. All salad materials should be thoroughly cold and salads kept cold until served.

Pecans can be cracked easily and meats gotten out whole if they are scalded and left in the hot water a few moments; crack lengthwise. Scald nut meats to blanch.

Do not be afraid to use red pepper in salads. It is wholesome and often prevents them from being indigestible.

Salads should not be mixed any longer before serving than absolutely necessary.

Onions should be sliced and soaked at least one hour in ice water before using for salads. They are milder and not so apt to disagree with one. Cucumbers should be sliced thinly and crisped in ice water one hour before eating. It makes them more wholesome.

Let the hands come in contact with salads as little as possible. Use fork and spoon for mixing dressings and tossing salads together. When convenient make French dressing and mix salad at the table.

A small lump of ice put into French dressing while being made keeps it cool and makes it milder.

A tiny pinch of sugar improves most salads.

The secret of making mayonnaise that will not curdle is in using perfectly fresh eggs and cold, pure olive oil. Care and judgment is also needed; materials differ and have to be used accordingly. Stir in one direction.

It is best not to use silver or metal utensil in making dressing or in mixing salads. The writer uses an orange wood fork and spoon. The wood is hard and does not discolor.

A heavy white porcelain bowl holding about one quart is a convenient size in which to mix mayonnaise.

Squeeze lemon and strain juice before beginning mayonnaise.

When mayonnaise loosens or begins to curdle, put in a pinch of corn starch, or if it separates after making, put an egg yolk into a fresh bowl and gradually stir mayonnaise into it.

The writer never uses cream in combination with salad dressings, from the fact that lemon juice and vinegar curdle cream. The desired quantity of the following is a good substitute: one teacupful of fresh, rich, sweet milk thickened with one teaspoonful of corn starch cooked in a double boiler; when it begins to thicken add one teaspoonful of butter. When it is the consistency of thick cream, remove from fire, beat well and put near ice until needed. It will be referred to in these recipes as Cream Substitute.

When canned meats are used for salads, the can should be opened at least half hour before using, meat placed in a porcelain, glass or china bowl and thoroughly aerated.

Lettuce is so succulent and easy to bruise that breaking or pulling it to pieces with the fingers is a more delicate way than cutting with a knife.

Salads should never be sour but so delicately blended that no seasoning predominates.

“Distrust the condiment that bites too soon.”

A little claret added to Plain Mayonnaise is very nice for fruit salads.

Before making sandwiches, bread may be peeled, or all crust taken off with a very sharp knife.

Slightly melt butter before spreading on bread for sandwiches.

It is best to spread butter on end of loaf before slicing for sandwiches. Use very sharp knife for cutting bread.

An ordinary tea cup, level full, rounded table spoon and tea spoon are used for measuring these recipes.

## CUCUMBER SALAD.

Two long glass house cucumbers and one medium white onion sliced thinly and soaked in ice water. Drain well and lightly mix with two cold, firm tomatoes cut with a sharp knife into small pieces. Add a little Worcestershire sauce and a pinch of sugar to a plain French dressing and pour over salad and serve on lettuce leaves.

## AVOCADO PEAR SALAD.

Cut the meat of an avocado pear in strips, lengthwise, then cut into square blocks. Mix carefully, without mashing, with cold hard boiled eggs, cut up. If the pears are not too large, fill hulls with the salad and place on lettuce or serve on lettuce without the hulls. Dress with Mayonnaise No. 2.

## BANANA SALAD.

Cut lengthwise a firm, perfect banana and remove inside carefully forming a boat shaped case. Slice ripe strawberries, mix with the sliced banana meat and sprinkle with a little sugar. Pour Lemon Dressing over and carefully fill banana cases without mashing fruit. Place cases on strawberry leaves. This is dainty served with grated cheese toasted on crackers, and hot Russian tea.

## ORANGE BASKETS.

With a sharp, small knife, carefully cut large oranges in the shape of baskets with handles, and remove inside. Tie sprays of orange blossoms, or any small white flowers on handles with green baby ribbon. Fill baskets with chicken salad, put mayonnaise with a maraschino cherry on top of each and serve on sprays of orange leaves.

PREFACE.

The Project Gutenberg etext of the *Cloud City Cook Book*
by Mrs. William H. Nash
Leadville, Colorado
Herald Democrat Steam Book and Job Printing House
1889

"Of making many books there is no end," said a wise man; but probably he had good cooks. There is a "place" for all things as well as a "time," and every hungry man knows the place for a good dinner. If the shortest road to man's heart is by way of his stomach, then the projectors of this little volume think they have struck it rich. So, like all other authors, we have written to meet a "long felt want." There are cook-books and cook-books, but who ever saw a cook-book for "Cloud City"? It is a well-established fact that in a high altitude the science culinary has its local and peculiar laws. It is commonly held that a different proportion of ingredients is necessary, as well as a different length of time. It is even claimed by some that more fuel is required here than in a lower altitude. Be this as it may, it is well established that the husband, who has recently brought his wife from the East, is not in healthy employment when he reminds her of the superior quality of his mother's cooking. He must wait until she has learned the new conditions in her new world. Without a scientific explanation of why the boiling point is reached at lower temperature here than at lower altitude, or whether this one fact accounts for the necessity of different proportions of ingredients in cookery, the Ladies of the Congregational Church gracefully bow themselves before the public with a genuine blessing to every family. Poor cooking is responsible for much of the wretched health of women and children, and much of the drinking habit among men. If, by gathering together in this little volume the wisest experience, wrought out in the peculiar conditions of this lofty altitude, we are able to bring peace and happiness to the home, our ambition shall have been amply satisfied.

Ladies Congregational Church.

PEA SOUP.

Parboil the peas in saleratus water (one heaping teaspoon to kettle two-thirds full of water), then wash well and put in to boil with a piece of salt pork. Season to taste, with salt and pepper, and onions previously fried in butter. Add dried bread crumbs just before serving.--Mrs. C. H. Bailey.

* * *

TOMATO SOUP.

One quart of tomatoes, or a two-pound can of tomatoes, to which add one quart water, one-half of a small onion sliced, a piece of butter the size of a hen's egg, in which rub a large tablespoon of flour, and boil slowly one hour. Just before serving, strain the soup and add one pint of scalded milk.

* * *

BLACK BEAN SOUP.

One pint of black beans, a small joint or shank of beef, a slice of salt pork. Soak the beans over night, drain off the water, and put them into the kettle with the meat, and cover with water. Boil about five hours; strain through the colander. Season with red pepper and a little wine. Add the yolks of three hard-boiled eggs and slices of lemon.--Mrs. Werner.

POTATO BREAD.

Six good-sized potatoes, boiled and well mashed; one pint or more of the water in which they were boiled, one cup of yeast for the sponge. Set the sponge in a warm place over night. In the morning, when kneading the bread add a little salt, little sugar, lard the size of an egg, and sufficient luke-warm water to make six loaves of bread. --Mrs. Hugh Parry.

* * *

GRIDDLE CAKES.

One cup stale bread crumbs soaked in two cups of water, three cups flour, one yeast cake to start. Let it rise over night; in the morning add two eggs and one-half teaspoon soda, and milk to form a thin batter. The batter left can be used successive mornings, the same as buckwheats.

* * *

RUSK.

One pint milk and one pint sugar; warm slightly, add one-half cup yeast, raisins and some flour. Let set over night, and in the morning add salt, three beaten eggs, one heaping cup melted butter and more flour. Let it rise, then make into rolls and when light bake.--Mrs. O. H. Simons.

FISH CHOWDER.

Try out small pieces of salt pork in a kettle. Cut up a medium-sized fish, slice thin four or five potatoes; add these to the salt pork in alternate layers; cover with boiling water and cook until soft. Season to taste, add an onion if liked, one large pint milk, and piece of butter. Let boil. Add a few Boston crackers (split) just before serving.

* * *

GRAPE PRESERVES.

Wash the grapes, weigh, having equal weight of sugar and grapes; then pulp the grapes, put the pulp in a kettle and boil twenty-five minutes. Rub through a sieve; return this to the kettle, add the sugar, and boil thirty minutes, then put in the skins and boil ten minutes.--Miss R. H. Nash.

SWEET POTATO PIE.

Boil or bake sufficient sweet potatoes to make a pint of pulp when rubbed through a colander; add a pint of milk, a small cup of sugar, a little salt, yolks of two eggs, one teaspoon lemon extract. Bake in a shallow pan lined with rich crust. When done, beat the whites with a little powdered sugar for top, and brown in the oven.--Mrs. Hugh Parry.

* * *

LEMON PIE.

The juice and grated rind of one lemon, one tablespoon cornstarch, one teacup sugar, two eggs (reserving the white of one), one cup boiling water. Mix all together and cook, stirring constantly until it thickens; pour it in the crust and bake. Beat the white with three spoons sugar and spread on top; return to the oven and brown lightly.--Mrs. McKenzie.

PANDOWDY
_Gelett Burgess_
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Stag Cook Book*, by Carroll Mac Sheridan

In a quart pudding dish arrange alternate layers of sliced apples and bits of bread; place on each layer dots of butter, a little sugar, and a pinch each of ground cinnamon, cloves and allspice.

When the dish is filled, pour over it half a cupful each of molasses and water, mixed well; cover the top with bread crumbs.

Place the dish in a pan containing hot water, and bake for three-quarters of an hour, or until the apples are soft.

Serve hot, with cream or any light pudding sauce.

Raisins or chopped almonds are sometimes added.

VEGETABLE SALAD
William Allen White
ibid

My idea of good food is a vegetable salad. Any kind of a vegetable salad is good; some are better than others. Here is a recipe for a French dressing on a lettuce salad which you should try on your meat grinder, or your potato masher, or your rolling pin or whatever kitchen utensil you can play.

Get a crisp head of lettuce, discard the outer green leaves, using the inner yellow and white. Wash it thoroughly, and after pulling it apart dry each leaf with a tea towel. Put it in a big bowl—a big mixing bowl, six inches deep anyway. Then set that to one side, and get about as much onion as the end of your first finger would make, if it was chopped off at the second joint. Mince that. Put it in the bottom of a bowl. Take a large tablespoon; put in salt and paprika to taste, and don't be afraid of making it salty, then add oil and vinegar, about three or four to one, mixing them in the spoon until it slops over into the onion, and then stir the salt and paprika and oil and vinegar down into the bowl of minced onion, taking a salad fork and jabbing it around in the mixture until the onion has been fairly well crushed and the onion flavor permeates the mixed oil and vinegar, and the salt and paprika have become for the moment a part of the mass. Don't let it stand a second, but pour it quickly into the bowl of dry lettuce, and then stir like the devil. Keep on stirring; stir some more, and serve as quickly as possible.

Cheese may be mashed into the onion before putting on the oil and vinegar and paprika and salt. If one wants to add tomatoes, wait until the last three jabs of the stirring fork into the lettuce, and then quarter the tomatoes and turn them in just before you turn the lettuce over the last two or three times. This is done so that the watery juice of the tomatoes won't get smeared over the oil on the lettuce leaves. If you stir the tomatoes in early, you get a runny, watery, gooey mess. Cucumbers may be added, and they should be stirred in rather earlier than the tomatoes in the business of mixing the lettuce leaves and the dressing. Green peppers may be added if they are cut into strings, but too much outside fixings spoils the salad for me. The tomatoes are about as far as one can go wisely.

HOG JOWL AND TURNIP GREENS
_Irvin S. Cobb
ibid

_Paducah Style_

For a person who has written so copiously about food and the pleasures of eating it, I probably know less of the art of preparing it than any living creature. I cannot give my favorite recipe because I have none; but I am glad to give the names of my two favorite dishes, to wit, as follows:

1st—Hog jowl and turnip greens—Paducah style
2nd—Another helping of the same.

EDITOR'S NOTE:—Hog Jowl, Paducah Style, may be prepared like this:

Get the jowl. Some prefer it cooked and served with the bone; others remove the bone before serving. Boil it in well salted water for thirty minutes, then add the turnip greens and boil at least thirty minutes longer. Serve with plenty of butter for dressing; a dash of vinegar and a semi-colon of mustard are used by some folks who are hard to please.

Beet greens could be used but they are not considered au fait, and to use spinach is an absolute faux pas.

CORN FLAKES
Booth Tarkington
ibid

My favorite dish is corn flakes. They should be placed in a saucer or hollow dish, then lifted in both hands and rolled for a moment, then

dropped back into the dish. After that an indefinite quantity of cream should be poured upon them. They should be eaten with a spoon. I don't know how to prepare anything else for the table. I think the best Kennebunkport manner of steaming clams is as follows:

A bushel of clams
4 dozen lobsters
4 dozen ears of sweet corn
4 dozen sweet potatoes
4 dozen eggs

A cartload of seaweed, a bonfire burning for six hours on rocks, then swept away; the lobsters, clams, etc., placed in the seaweed, and the seaweed on the hot rocks and covered with BBB canvas. Allow to steam until screams of distress issue from the seaweed; then be careful what you eat!

## THE FORESTS OF WASHINGTON

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Steep Trails,* by John Muir

When we force our way into the depths of the forests, following any of the rivers back to their fountains, we find that the bulk of the woods is made up of the Douglas spruce (Pseudotsuga Douglasii), named in honor of David Douglas, an enthusiastic botanical explorer of early Hudson's Bay times. It is not only a very large tree but a very beautiful one, with lively bright-green drooping foliage, handsome pendent cones, and a shaft exquisitely straight and regular. For so large a tree it is astonishing how many find nourishment and space to grow on any given area. The magnificent shafts push their spires into the sky close together with as regular a growth as that of a well-tilled field of grain. And no ground has been better tilled for the growth of trees than that on which these forests are growing. For it has been thoroughly ploughed and rolled by the mighty glaciers from the mountains, and sifted and mellowed and outspread in beds hundreds of feet in depth by the broad streams that issued from their fronts at the time of their recession, after they had long covered all the land.

The largest tree of this species that I have myself measured was nearly twelve feet in diameter at a height of five feet from the ground, and, as near as I could make out under the circumstances, about three hundred feet in length. It stood near the head of the Sound not far from Olympia. I have seen a few others, both near the coast and thirty or forty miles back in the interior, that were from eight to ten feet in diameter, measured above their bulging insteps; and many from six to seven feet. I have heard of some that were said to be three hundred and twenty-five feet in height and fifteen feet in diameter, but none that

I measured were so large, though it is not at all unlikely that such colossal giants do exist where conditions of soil and exposure are surpassingly favorable. The average size of all the trees of this species found up to an elevation on the mountain slopes of, say, two thousand feet above sea level, taking into account only what may be called mature trees two hundred and fifty to five hundred years of age, is perhaps, at a vague guess, not more than a height of one hundred and seventy-five or two hundred feet and a diameter of three feet; though, of course, throughout the richest sections the size is much greater.

In proportion to its weight when dry, the timber from this tree is perhaps stronger than that of any other conifer in the country. It is tough and durable and admirably adapted in every way for shipbuilding, piles, and heavy timbers in general. But its hardness and liability to warp render it much inferior to white or sugar pine for fine work. In the lumber markets of California it is known as "Oregon pine" and is used almost exclusively for spars, bridge timbers, heavy planking, and the framework of houses.

The same species extends northward in abundance through British Columbia and southward through the coast and middle regions of Oregon and California. It is also a common tree in the canyons and hollows of the Wahsatch Mountains in Utah, where it is called "red pine" and on portions of the Rocky Mountains and some of the short ranges of the Great Basin. Along the coast of California it keeps company with the redwood wherever it can find a favorable opening. On the western slope of the Sierra, with the yellow pine and incense cedar, it forms a pretty well-defined belt at a height of from three thousand to six thousand feet above the sea, and extends into the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains in Southern California. But, though widely distributed, it is only in these cool, moist northlands that it reaches its finest development, tall, straight, elastic, and free from limbs to an immense height, growing down to tide water, where ships of the largest size may lie close alongside and load at the least possible cost.

Growing with the Douglas we find the white spruce, or "Sitka pine," as it is sometimes called. This also is a very beautiful and majestic tree, frequently attaining a height of two hundred feet or more and a diameter of five or six feet. It is very abundant in southeastern Alaska, forming the greater part of the best forests there. Here it is found mostly around the sides of beaver-dam and other meadows and on the borders of the streams, especially where the ground is low. One tree that I saw felled at the head of the Hop-Ranch meadows on the upper Snoqualmie River, though far from being the largest I have seen, measured a hundred and eighty feet in length and four and a half in diameter, and was two hundred and fifty-seven years of age.

In habit and general appearance it resembles the Douglas spruce, but it is somewhat less slender and the needles grow close together all

around the branchlets and are so stiff and sharp-pointed on the younger branches that they cannot well be handled without gloves. The timber is tough, close-grained, white, and looks more like pine than any other of the spruces. It splits freely, makes excellent shingles and in general use in house-building takes the place of pine. I have seen logs of this species a hundred feet long and two feet in diameter at the upper end. It was named in honor of the old Scotch botanist Archibald Menzies, who came to this coast with Vancouver in 1792 [23].

The beautiful hemlock spruce with its warm yellow-green foliage is also common in some portions of these woods. It is tall and slender and exceedingly graceful in habit before old age comes on, but the timber is inferior and is seldom used for any other than the roughest work, such as wharf-building.

The Western arbor-vitae [24] (Thuja gigantea) grows to a size truly gigantic on low rich ground. Specimens ten feet in diameter and a hundred and forty feet high are not at all rare. Some that I have heard of are said to be fifteen and even eighteen feet thick. Clad in rich, glossy plumes, with gray lichens covering their smooth, tapering boles, perfect trees of this species are truly noble objects and well worthy the place they hold in these glorious forests. It is of this tree that the Indians make their fine canoes.

Of the other conifers that are so happy as to have place here, there are three firs, three or four pines, two cypresses, a yew, and another spruce, the Abies Pattoniana [25]. This last is perhaps the most beautiful of all the spruces, but, being comparatively small and growing only far back on the mountains, it receives but little attention from most people. Nor is there room in a work like this for anything like a complete description of it, or of the others I have just mentioned. Of the three firs, one (Picea grandis) [26], grows near the coast and is one of the largest trees in the forest, sometimes attaining a height of two hundred and fifty feet. The timber, however, is inferior in quality and not much sought after while so much that is better is within reach. One of the others (P. amabilis, var. nobilis) forms magnificent forests by itself at a height of about three thousand to four thousand feet above the sea. The rich plushy, plumelike branches grow in regular whorls around the trunk, and on the topmost whorls, standing erect, are the large, beautiful cones. This is far the most beautiful of all the firs. In the Sierra Nevada it forms a considerable portion of the main forest belt on the western slope, and it is there that it reaches its greatest size and greatest beauty. The third species (P. subalpina) forms, together with Abies Pattoniana, the upper edge of the timberline on the portion of the Cascades opposite the Sound. A thousand feet below the extreme limit of tree growth it occurs in beautiful groups amid parklike openings where flowers grow in extravagant profusion.

The pines are nowhere abundant in the State. The largest, the yellow

pine (Pinus ponderosa), occurs here and there on margins of dry gravelly prairies, and only in such situations have I yet seen it in this State. The others (P. monticola and P. contorta) are mostly restricted to the upper slopes of the mountains, and though the former of these two attains a good size and makes excellent lumber, it is mostly beyond reach at present and is not abundant. One of the cypresses (Cupressus Lawsoniana) [27] grows near the coast and is a fine large tree, clothed like the arbor-vitae in a glorious wealth of flat, feathery branches. The other is found here and there well up toward the edge of the timberline. This is the fine Alaska cedar (C. Nootkatensis), the lumber from which is noted for its durability, fineness of grain, and beautiful yellow color, and for its fragrance, which resembles that of sandalwood. The Alaska Indians make their canoe paddles of it and weave matting and coarse cloth from the fibrous brown bark.

Among the different kinds of hardwood trees are the oak, maple, madrona, birch, alder, and wild apple, while large cottonwoods are common along the rivers and shores of the numerous lakes.

The most striking of these to the traveler is the Menzies arbutus, or madrona, as it is popularly called in California. Its curious red and yellow bark, large thick glossy leaves, and panicles of waxy-looking greenish-white urn-shaped flowers render it very conspicuous. On the boles of the younger trees and on all the branches, the bark is so smooth and seamless that it does not appear as bark at all, but rather the naked wood. The whole tree, with the exception of the larger part of the trunk, looks as though it had been thoroughly peeled. It is found sparsely scattered along the shores of the Sound and back in the forests also on open margins, where the soil is not too wet, and extends up the coast on Vancouver Island beyond Nanaimo. But in no part of the State does it reach anything like the size and beauty of proportions that it attains in California, few trees here being more than ten or twelve inches in diameter and thirty feet high. It is, however, a very remarkable-looking object, standing there like some lost or runaway native of the tropics, naked and painted, beside that dark mossy ocean of northland conifers. Not even a palm tree would seem more out of place here.

The oaks, so far as my observation has reached, seem to be most abundant and to grow largest on the islands of the San Juan and Whidbey Archipelago. One of the three species of maples that I have seen is only a bush that makes tangles on the banks of the rivers. Of the other two one is a small tree, crooked and moss-grown, holding out its leaves to catch the light that filters down through the close-set spires of the great spruces. It grows almost everywhere throughout the entire extent of the forest until the higher slopes of the mountains are reached, and produces a very picturesque and delightful effect; relieving the bareness of the great shafts of the evergreens, without being close enough in its growth to hide them wholly, or to cover the bright mossy

carpet that is spread beneath all the dense parts of the woods.

The other species is also very picturesque and at the same time very large, the largest tree of its kind that I have ever seen anywhere. Not even in the great maple woods of Canada have I seen trees either as large or with so much striking, picturesque character. It is widely distributed throughout western Washington, but is never found scattered among the conifers in the dense woods. It keeps together mostly in magnificent groves by itself on the damp levels along the banks of streams or lakes where the ground is subject to overflow. In such situations it attains a height of seventy-five to a hundred feet and a diameter of four to eight feet. The trunk sends out large limbs toward its neighbors, laden with long drooping mosses beneath and rows of ferns on their upper surfaces, thus making a grand series of richly ornamented interlacing arches, with the leaves laid thick overhead, rendering the underwood spaces delightfully cool and open. Never have I seen a finer forest ceiling or a more picturesque one, while the floor, covered with tall ferns and rubus and thrown into hillocks by the bulging roots, matches it well. The largest of these maple groves that I have yet found is on the right bank of the Snoqualmie River, about a mile above the falls. The whole country hereabouts is picturesque, and interesting in many ways, and well worthy a visit by tourists passing through the Sound region, since it is now accessible by rail from Seattle.

Looking now at the forests in a comprehensive way, we find in passing through them again and again from the shores of the Sound to their upper limits, that some portions are much older than others, the trees much larger, and the ground beneath them strewn with immense trunks in every stage of decay, representing several generations of growth, everything about them giving the impression that these are indeed the "forests primeval," while in the younger portions, where the elevation of the ground is the same as to the sea level and the species of trees are the same as well as the quality of the soil, apart from the moisture which it holds, the trees seem to be and are mostly of the same age, perhaps from one hundred to two or three hundred years, with no gray-bearded, venerable patriarchs--forming tall, majestic woods without any grandfathers.

When we examine the ground we find that it is as free from those mounds of brown crumbling wood and mossy ancient fragments as are the growing trees from very old ones. Then perchance, we come upon a section farther up the slopes towards the mountains that has no trees more than fifty years old, or even fifteen or twenty years old. These last show plainly enough that they have been devastated by fire, as the black, melancholy monuments rising here and there above the young growth bear witness. Then, with this fiery, suggestive testimony, on examining those sections whose trees are a hundred years old or two hundred, we find the same fire records, though heavily veiled with mosses and lichens, showing that a century or two ago the forests that stood there had been swept

away in some tremendous fire at a time when rare conditions of drouth made their burning possible. Then, the bare ground sprinkled with the winged seed from the edges of the burned district, a new forest sprang up, nearly every tree starting at the same time or within a few years, thus producing the uniformity of size we find in such places; while, on the other hand, in those sections of ancient aspect containing very old trees both standing and fallen, we find no traces of fire, nor from the extreme dampness of the ground can we see any possibility of fire ever running there.

Fire, then, is the great governing agent in forest distribution and to a great extent also in the conditions of forest growth. Where fertile lands are very wet one half the year and very dry the other, there can be no forests at all. Where the ground is damp, with drouth occurring only at intervals of centuries, fine forests may be found, other conditions being favorable. But it is only where fires never run that truly ancient forests of pitchy coniferous trees may exist. When the Washington forests are seen from the deck of a ship out in the middle of the sound, or even from the top of some high, commanding mountain, the woods seem everywhere perfectly solid. And so in fact they are in general found to be. The largest openings are those of the lakes and prairies, the smaller of beaver meadows, bogs, and the rivers; none of them large enough to make a distinct mark in comprehensive views.

Of the lakes there are said to be some thirty in King's County alone; the largest, Lake Washington, being twenty-six miles long and four miles wide. Another, which enjoys the duckish name of Lake Squak, is about ten miles long. Both are pure and beautiful, lying imbedded in the green wilderness. The rivers are numerous and are but little affected by the weather, flowing with deep, steady currents the year round. They are short, however, none of them drawing their sources from beyond the Cascade Range. Some are navigable for small steamers on their lower courses, but the openings they make in the woods are very narrow, the tall trees on their banks leaning over in some places, making fine shady tunnels.

The largest of the prairies that I have seen lies to the south of Tacoma on the line of the Portland and Tacoma Railroad. The ground is dry and gravelly, a deposit of water-washed cobbles and pebbles derived from moraines--conditions which readily explain the absence of trees here and on other prairies adjacent to Yelm. Berries grow in lavish abundance, enough for man and beast with thousands of tons to spare. The woods are full of them, especially about the borders of the waters and meadows where the sunshine may enter. Nowhere in the north does Nature set a more bountiful table. There are huckleberries of many species, red, blue, and black, some of them growing close to the ground, others on bushes eight to ten feet high; also salal berries, growing on a low, weak-stemmed bush, a species of gaultheria, seldom more than a foot or two high. This has pale pea-green glossy leaves two or three inches long

and half an inch wide and beautiful pink flowers, urn-shaped, that make a fine, rich show. The berries are black when ripe, are extremely abundant, and, with the huckleberries, form an important part of the food of the Indians, who beat them into paste, dry them, and store them away for winter use, to be eaten with their oily fish. The salmon-berry also is very plentiful, growing in dense prickly tangles. The flowers are as large as wild roses and of the same color, and the berries measure nearly an inch in diameter. Besides these there are gooseberries, currants, raspberries, blackberries, and, in some favored spots, strawberries. The mass of the underbrush of the woods is made up in great part of these berry-bearing bushes. Together with white-flowered spiraea twenty feet high, hazel, dogwood, wild rose, honeysuckle, symphoricarpus, etc. But in the depths of the woods, where little sunshine can reach the ground, there is but little underbrush of any kind, only a very light growth of huckleberry and rubus and young maples in most places. The difficulties encountered by the explorer in penetrating the wilderness are presented mostly by the streams and bogs, with their tangled margins, and the fallen timber and thick carpet of moss covering all the ground.

Notwithstanding the tremendous energy displayed in lumbering and the grand scale on which it is being carried on, and the number of settlers pushing into every opening in search of farmlands, the woods of Washington are still almost entirely virgin and wild, without trace of human touch, savage or civilized. Indians, no doubt, have ascended most of the rivers on their way to the mountains to hunt the wild sheep and goat to obtain wool for their clothing, but with food in abundance on the coast they had little to tempt them into the wilderness, and the monuments they have left in it are scarcely more conspicuous than those of squirrels and bears; far less so than those of the beavers, which in damming the streams have made clearings and meadows which will continue to mark the landscape for centuries. Nor is there much in these woods to tempt the farmer or cattle raiser. A few settlers established homes on the prairies or open borders of the woods and in the valleys of the Chehalis and Cowlitz before the gold days of California. Most of the early immigrants from the Eastern States, however, settled in the fertile and open Willamette Valley or Oregon. Even now, when the search for land is so keen, with the exception of the bottom lands around the Sound and on the lower reaches of the rivers, there are comparatively few spots of cultivation in western Washington. On every meadow or opening of any kind some one will be found keeping cattle, planting hop vines, or raising hay, vegetables, and patches of grain. All the large spaces available, even back near the summits of the Cascade Mountains, were occupied long ago. The newcomers, building their cabins where the beavers once built theirs, keep a few cows and industriously seek to enlarge their small meadow patches by chopping, girdling, and burning the edge of the encircling forest, gnawing like beavers, and scratching for a living among the blackened stumps and logs, regarding the trees as their greatest enemies--a sort of larger pernicious weed immensely

difficult to get rid of.

But all these are as yet mere spots, making no visible scar in the distance and leaving the grand stretches of the forest as wild as they were before the discovery of the continent. For many years the axe has been busy around the shores of the Sound and ships have been falling in perpetual storm like flakes of snow. The best of the timber has been cut for a distance of eight or ten miles from the water and to a much greater distance along the streams deep enough to float the logs. Railroads, too, have been built to fetch in the logs from the best bodies of timber otherwise inaccessible except at great cost. None of the ground, however, has been completely denuded. Most of the young trees have been left, together with the hemlocks and other trees undesirable in kind or in some way defective, so that the neighboring trees appear to have closed over the gaps make by the removal of the larger and better ones, maintaining the general continuity of the forest and leaving no sign on the sylvan sea, at least as seen from a distance.

In felling the trees they cut them off usually at a height of six to twelve feet above the ground, so as to avoid cutting through the swollen base, where the diameter is so much greater. In order to reach this height the chopper cuts a notch about two inches wide and three or four deep and drives a board into it, on which he stands while at work. In case the first notch, cut as high as he can reach, is not high enough, he stands on the board that has been driven into the first notch and cuts another. Thus the axeman may often be seen at work standing eight or ten feet above the ground. If the tree is so large that with his long-handled axe the chopper is unable to reach to the farther side of it, then a second chopper is set to work, each cutting halfway across. And when the tree is about to fall, warned by the faint crackling of the strained fibers, they jump to the ground, and stand back out of danger from flying limbs, while the noble giant that had stood erect in glorious strength and beauty century after century, bows low at last and with gasp and groan and booming throb falls to earth.

Then with long saws the trees are cut into logs of the required length, peeled, loaded upon wagons capable of carrying a weight of eight or ten tons, hauled by a long string of oxen to the nearest available stream or railroad, and floated or carried to the Sound. There the logs are gathered into booms and towed by steamers to the mills, where workmen with steel spikes in their boots leap lightly with easy poise from one to another and by means of long pike poles push them apart and, selecting such as are at the time required, push them to the foot of a chute and drive dogs into the ends, when they are speedily hauled in by the mill machinery alongside the saw carriage and placed and fixed in position. Then with sounds of greedy hissing and growling they are rushed back and forth like enormous shuttles, and in an incredibly short time they are lumber and are aboard the ships lying at the mill wharves.

Many of the long, slender boles so abundant in these woods are saved for spars, and so excellent is their quality that they are in demand in almost every shipyard of the world. Thus these trees, felled and stripped of their leaves and branches, are raised again, transplanted and set firmly erect, given roots of iron and a new foliage of flapping canvas, and sent to sea. On they speed in glad, free motion, cheerily waving over the blue, heaving water, responsive to the same winds that rocked them when they stood at home in the woods. After standing in one place all their lives they now, like sight-seeing tourists, go round the world, meeting many a relative from the old home forest, some like themselves, wandering free, clad in broad canvas foliage, others planted head downward in mud, holding wharf platforms aloft to receive the wares of all nations.

The mills of Puget sound and those of the redwood region of California are said to be the largest and most effective lumber-makers in the world. Tacoma alone claims to have eleven sawmills, and Seattle about as many; while at many other points on the Sound, where the conditions are particularly favorable, there are immense lumbering establishments, as at Ports Blakely, Madison, Discovery, Gamble, Ludlow, etc., with a capacity all together of over three million feet a day. Nevertheless, the observer coming up the Sound sees not nor hears anything of this fierce storm of steel that is devouring the forests, save perhaps the shriek of some whistle or the columns of smoke that mark the position of the mills. All else seems as serene and unscathed as the silent watching mountains.

IMMORTALITY[1]
by Henry W. BEECHER
1813-1887
The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The World's Great Sermons, Volume 6:*

*_If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable._--1 Cor. xv., 19.*

This is not the declaration of a universal principle: it is biographical and personal. And yet, there is in it a principle of prime importance. It is true that Paul and his compeers had sacrificed everything that was dear to man for the sake of Christ. Paul had given up the place that he held among his countrymen, and the things which surely awaited him. He had consented to be an exile. Loving Palestine and the memory of his fathers, as only a Jew could love, he found himself an outcast, and despised everywhere by his own people. And the catalog that he gives of the sufferings which he felt keenly; which perhaps would not have been felt by a man less susceptible than he, but which were no less keen in his case--that catalog shows how much he had given up for Christ. And if it should turn out that after all he had followed a mere fable, a myth; that Christ was but a man; that, dying, He had come to an end; that He stayed dead, and that there was no resurrection, no future, but only that past through which he waded, and that present in which he was suffering, then, surely, it would be true that of all men he was most miserable.

This is the biographical view; but it may be said of all men, in this respect, that no persons can so ill afford to lose faith of immortality as those who have had all their affections burnished, deepened and rendered sensitive by the power of Christianity. When Christianity has had the education of generation after generation, and has shaped the style of its manhood, and ordained the institutions by which its affections have been enlarged and purified; when, in short, generations of men have been legitimately the children of Christianity, to take away from them the faith of immortality would be a cruelty which could have no parallel in the amount of suffering which it would entail.

It is not necessarily true that men without a hope of Christianity would have no incitement to virtue--certainly not in the ordinary way in which it is put to us. Abstractly, it is said that virtue is its own reward--and it is. If there was enough of it to amount to anything, it would be a great, an exceeding great, reward; but where it is a spark; a germ; where it is struggling for its own existence; where it bears but a few ripe fruits, the reward is hardly worth the culture. If all that we get is what we have in this

life, it is but little.

Many men are favorably organized and favorably situated; they have an unyearning content; things seem good enough for them; and they do not understand why it is that persons should desire immortality and glory--that is, at first. In general, I think there are few persons that live long in life who do not, sooner or later, come to a point in which they wake up to the consciousness of a need of this kind. It is not always true in the case of persons of refined moral and intellectual culture that they are conscious of needing a belief in immortality; but a belief in immortality is the unavoidable result and the indispensable requirement of all true manhood. When you look at growth, not in each particular case, but largely, as it develops itself in communities; when you consider it, not only in a single individual, but in whole communities, as they develop from childhood to manhood, or from barbarism through semi-civilization to civilization and refinement, the law of development is always away from animal life and its sustaining appetites and passions toward the moral and the intellectual. That is the direction in which unfolding takes place.

The naturalist watches the insect, and studies all the stages through which it goes, till it becomes a perfect insect. We look at a seed, and see how it develops stem and leaf and blossom all the way through, till we find out what the plant is in its final and perfect condition. And in studying men to know what is the perfect condition of manhood, looking at them from the beginning to the end, which way does manhood lie, in the direction of the bodily appetites and senses, or in the other direction?

Men come into life perfect animals. There is very little that culture does in that direction, giving them a little more or a little less use of themselves, as the case may be. That which we mean when we speak of developing manhood in a child, is something more than the development of symmetry of form and power of physical organization. When we speak of the civilization and refinement of the race at large, development does not mean bodily power or bodily skill: it means reason; moral sense; imagination; profounder affection; subtler, purer, sweeter domestic relations. Manhood grows away from bodily conditions, without ever leaving them. The body becomes a socket, and the soul is a lamp in it. And if you look narrowly at what we mean by growth in mankind, whether it be applied to the individual or to the race, you will find that we mean an unfolding which takes a man away from the material toward that which is subtler, more spiritual, existing outside of the ordinary senses, tho acting from them, as something better than bone and muscle, nerve and tissue.

All development, then, is from the animal toward the spiritual and

the invisible. This is the public sentiment of mankind even in the lower forms of society. What are considered heroic traits, the things which bring admiration to men, if narrowly examined will be found to be not the things which belong to men as brutes--tho these things may be employed by them as instruments. Even in the cases of such men as Samson and Hercules, who were rude, brute men, it was not their strength that drew admiration to them: it was their heroism; it was their patriotism; it was that which they did by their strength for their kind, and not for themselves. And in lower societies it is courage, it is self-devotion, it is the want of fear, it is the higher form of animal life, that attracts admiration. But as we develop out of barbarous into civilized conditions, we admire men, not because they can lift so much, or throw such heavy weights, or endure such hardships of body. Admiration on these accounts has its place; but higher than these is the power of thought, the power of planning, the power of executing, the power of living at one point so as to comprehend in the effects produced all circuits of time in the future. Thought-power; emotion; moral sense; justice; equity in all its forms; higher manhood, and its branches, which stretch up into the atmosphere and reach nearest to the sun--these are something other than those qualities which develop earliest, and are lowest--nearest to the ground.

True manhood, then, has its ripeness in the higher faculties. Without disdaining the companionship of the body the manhood of man grows away from it--in another direction. There is not simply the ripening of the physical that is in man; but there is, by means of the physical, the ripening of the intellectual, the emotional, the moral, the esthetic life, as well as the whole spiritual nature.

When reason and moral sense are developed, there will inevitably spring up within a man an element the value of which consists in perpetuating things--in their continuance. It is spontaneous and universal for one to seek to perpetuate, to extend life. I do not mean by this that one wants to live a great while; but men are perpetually under the unconscious influence of this in their nature: the attempt to give form and permanence to that which is best in their manhood. We build, to be sure, primarily, to cover ourselves from the elements; but we very soon cease to build for that only: we not merely build for protection from cold and from wet, but we build for gratification. We build to gratify the sense of beauty, the sense of convenience, and the sense of love. And we go on beyond that: we build in order that we may send down to those who are to come after us a memorial of our embodied, incarnated thoughts. In other words, when men build, they seek, by incarnation, to render things permanent which have existed only as thoughts or transient emotions. There is a tendency to incarnate the fugitive elements in men, and give them permanence. And the element of continuing is one

of the elements which belong to the higher manhood.

This throws light upon the material growths of society. Men strive to perpetuate thoughts and feelings which are evanescent unless they are born into matter. Men build things for duration. There is this unconscious following out of things to make them last; to give them long periods. And it opens up to men the sense of their augmented being. Largeness of being is indissolubly connected with extended time of being.

We admire the pyramids, not because they have been associated with so many histories, but because they have stood so many ages. We admire old trees, not because so many tribes have sat under them, nor because so many events have taken place beneath them, but simply because they have age with them. For there are mute, inexplicable feelings connected with the mere extension of time which belong to the higher development of manhood in us. Frangible things are of less value than things that are infrangible. Things that last are of more value, on the same plane, than their congeners are that do not last.

Who can equal the pictures which are painted on the panes of glass in our winter rooms? Where can you find a Lambineau, or any painter who can give a mountain scenery such as we have for nothing, every morning, when we wake up, and such as the sun outside, or the stove inside, destroys before ten o'clock? These pictures are not valued as are those which are painted on canvas, and which are not half so good; but the element of enduring is with the latter, while the element of evanescence is with the former. Tho the pictures on the pane are finer than those on the canvas, they lack the element of time, on which value so largely depends. The soul craves, hungers for, this quality of continuance as an element for measuring the value of things. This element of time is somewhat felt in the earlier conditions of humanity; but it grows with the development of men, and attaches itself to every part of human life.

I never saw a diamond that was so beautiful as are the dew-drops which I see on my lawn in summer. What is the difference between a dew-drop and a diamond? One goes in a moment; it flashes and dies; but the other endures; and its value consists in its endurance. There are hundreds of things which are as beautiful as a diamond in their moment; but the endurance of the diamond is measured by ages, and not by moments, and so carries on the value.

I do not draw these reasonings very close as yet--I do not desire to put too much emphasis upon them; but I think you will see that there is a drift in them, and that they will bear, at last, an important relation to this question of immortality. The element of manhood carries with it a very powerful sense of the value of existence.

The desire to live is a blind instinct. A happy experience brings to this instinct many auxiliaries--the expectation of pleasure; the wish to complete unfinished things; the clinging affection to those that have excited love; and habits of enterprise.

Besides all these, is a development of the sense of value in simply being. We have said that in external matters the continuity of being is an element of value in the judgment which mankind at large have put upon things. We say that the same is true in respect to the inward existence--to manhood itself. The savage cares very little for life. He lives for to-day; and in every to-day he lives for the hour. Time is of the least importance to him. The barbarian differs from the savage in this: that he lives to-day for to-morrow, perhaps, but not for next year. The semi-civilized man lives for next year; but only for the year, or for years. The civilized man begins to live in the present for the future. And the Christian civilized man begins to live with a sense of the forever.

The extension of the sense of time goes on with the development of manhood in men. The sweet, the tender, the loving, the thoughtful, the intellectual, live not simply with a sense of life as a pleasure-bringer: there grows up in them, with their development toward manhood, an intrinsic sense of the value of being itself. The soul knows the cargo that it carries. It knows that that cargo is destined to immortality. As men are conscious of seeing more, of thinking more, and of feeling more; as thought becomes more precious; as emotion becomes deeper and more valuable; so men more and more feel that they cannot afford to have such things go to waste.

A man who takes in his hands a lump of mud and molds it to some pleasing form, cares but little when, dropping it, he sees it flatten on the ground. The man that grinds a crystal, and sees it broken, thinks of it for a moment, perhaps, with regret, but soon forgets it. No one, however, can see an organized thing, having its uses, and indicating exquisite skill and long experience, dashed to pieces without pain. But what is anything that is organized in life worth in comparison with the soul of a man? And if that soul be pure, and sweet, and deep, and noble, and active, and fruitful, who can, without a pang, look at it, and think that it must in an instant go to nothing, dissolving again as an icicle from a roof in the spring?

The feeling is not the fruit of mere reflection. It is instinctive. It is universal. Men do not cultivate it on purpose. They cannot help having it. No man of moral culture can regard human life as without immortality except with profound melancholy. No man that is susceptible to reflectiveness can bear to think of man's existence here without the bright background of another life.

The sense of the continuity of existence is grounded in men, and grows with their refinement and development and strength, and gives color to their life, and change to their opinions, it may be.

To men who have developed moral sense and intellectual culture, every element of value in life is made precious by some conscious or some unconscious element of time and continuance. It is the nature of our better faculties, in their better states, to place a man in such relations to everything that is most precious to him, that it gives him pleasure in the proportion in which it seems to be continuous and permanent, and gives him pain in the proportion in which it seems to be evanescent and perishing.

We are building a crystal character with much pain and self-denial; and it is to be built as bubbles are blown? What is finer in line than the bubble? What is more airy? Where are pictures more exquisite, where are colors more tender and rich and beautiful--and where is there anything that is born so near to its end as a bubble? Is the character which we are building with so much pain and suffering and patience, with so much burden of conscience, and with so much aspiration; is the character which we are forming in the invisible realm of the soul--is that but a bubble? Is that only a thin film which reflects the transient experiences of a life of joy or sadness, and goes out? Then, what is life worth? If I had no function but that of a pismire; if I were a beetle that rolled in the dirt, and yet were clothed with a power of reflection, and knew what the depths of feeling were, what intense emotions were, and what struggling and yearning were; if, being a mere insect, I had all the works in the intellect of man, and all the aspiration that goes with spiritual elements; if I were but a leaf-cutter, a bug in the soil, or about the same thing on a little larger pattern, and were to be blotted out at death, what would be the use of my trying to grow? If by refining and whetting our faculties they become more susceptible to pleasure, they become equally susceptible to pain. And in this great, grinding, groaning world, pain is altogether out of proportion to pleasure, in an exquisite temperament. The finer men are the better they are, if they are forever; but the finer men are the worse they are if they are only for a day; for they have a disproportion of sensibility to suffering over and above present remuneration and conscious enjoyment.

Men feel an intrinsic sense of personality and personal worth. They have self-esteem, which is the only central, spinal, manly faculty which gives them a sense of personal identity and personal value, and which is an auxiliary counselor of conscience itself. This sense of "I" demands something more than a short round of physical life, to be followed by extinction. I am too valuable to perish so; and every step in life has been training me in the direction of greater

value. As men grow broader, and stronger, and finer, and deeper, and sweeter, they become more and more conscious of the intrinsic value of their being, and demand for themselves a harbor in order that they may not be wrecked or foundered.

Nor do I think that there can be found, to any considerable extent, or developed, friendships which shall not, with all their strength and with all their depth, resist the conception of dissolution or of fading. For friendships are not casual likings. Friendships are not merely the interchange of good nature, and the ordinary friendly offices of good neighborhood. These things are friendly, but they do not comprise friendship. Two trees may grow contiguous, and throw their shade one over upon the other; but they never touch nor help each other; and their roots quarrel for the food that is in the ground. But two vines, growing over a porch, meet each other, and twine together, and twist fiber into fiber and stem into stem, and take shape from each other, and are substantially one. And such are friendships. Now, one cannot have his life divided as two trees are. He cannot enter into partnership with others, and be conscious that that partnership shall be but for an hour or for a moment. The sanctity, the honor, the exaltation, the exhilaration of a true and manly friendship lies in the thought of its continuance. There can be no deep friendship which does not sign for endlessness.

Still more is this true of love: not that rudimentary form which seeks lower fruitions, and which is often but little more than passion done up in friendship; but that higher love which manifests itself chiefly in the spiritual realm; that love which is not forever asking, but forever giving; that love which is not centripetal, but centrifugal; that love which, like a mother's, gives for the pleasure of giving; that love which reveres; that love which looks up; that love which seeks to exalt its object by doing what is pleasant and noble; that love which demands continuance, elevation, yea, grandeur, it may be, in the thing beloved. How little will such a love tolerate the idea of evanescence, the dread of discontinuing! Can such a love do other than yearn for immortality?

So then, if you take the thought, it is this: that if men develop, they come under the dominion of higher faculties; and that it is then their nature to stamp on all their occupations, on their self-consciousness, on the whole development of their affections, the need of continuance, of immortality. There are, therefore, in the growth of the mind itself, as a department of nature, these elements of conviction. The mind cannot do other than develop in itself a faith in immortality.

It may be said, and it sometimes is said, that the origin of the belief of existence out of the body, of spiritual existence, may

be traced directly back to the dreams of the barbarous ages, to a period when men were so low that they did not recognize the difference between a dream and a waking reality--to a time when persons dreamed that their friends came back to them, and waked up and believed that they had been back. Thus, it is said, began the thought of continuity of life after death. For my part, I do not care how it began. The question is not how it started; the question is, What becomes of it now that it has begun? No matter how it was born, what purpose is it to serve? What is it adapted to do? How is it calculated to influence our manhood? In what way shall it be employed to lead man God-ward? How shall it be used to work most effectually in the direction of civilization and refinement? It so fits every human soul, that men will not let it go. They cling to it with their inward and best nature.

All experiences of human life fall in with this tendency of the mind. When men look out upon the incoherent and unmannerly course of things in time, I can understand how, believing in the future, they may live with patience; but in every age of the world where the clear light of immortality has not shone, men have mostly been discouraged, have been generally indifferent to public superiority, and have taken no interest in things done for the sake of humanity. Such is the worthlessness of time, to the thought of those that have no faith in the future, that they have cared for little except present physical enjoyment. And on the whole, when such men crowd together, and tribes take the place of individuals, or kingdoms take the place of tribes, with all their complications in the working out of their clashing results, they look upon human life, and feel that the world is not worth living for. Things are so uncertain, products are in such disproportion to their causes, or to the expectations of men, that if there is to be nothing but this life, then, "Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die," is not only the philosophy of the epicurean, but the temptation of the most wise and frugal and self-restraining. The nature of life to a man who is highly educated requires that he should believe in the continuity and existence of the myriads that he sees in such a state of quarreling infelicity and wretchedness in this mortal condition. The utter futility of the best part of man's life here, the total bankruptcy of his best endeavors, the worthlessness of his career from the material standpoint, makes it imperative on him to believe that he shall have another chance in another sphere of being.

Is it enough to have been born, to have lived till one is of age, and then to be launched out to founder in mid-ocean? Is it enough that one should devote the best part of his life to the building of a character, only to see the fabric which he has constructed tumbling about his ears? Is this enough in the day of distress and bankruptcy? Is it enough, in the time when a man's ambitions are crossed, and the sky is dark, and he can do nothing but stand

amid the ruins of his hopes and expectations? Is not the thought revolting to every instinct of manhood?

But if there is another life; if all our labor has this value in it, that while a man is building up his outward estate, if it is certain that the man himself will live, no matter what becomes of his property and his reputation, then all his endeavors have endless scope, and his life becomes redeemable and radiant.

Nowhere else so much as in the realm of grief, I think, is the question of immortality interpreted. It is true that the first shock of overwhelming grief sometimes drives faith out of the mind; that it sometimes staggers the reason; that it sometimes dispossesses the moral sense of its accustomed health, and leaves the mind in weakness. As in a fever, the natural eye can see nothing aright, and things then seem to dance in the air, and take on grotesque forms, so persons who are bewildered with first sorrow oftentimes see things amiss. And there is no skepticism which is so deep and pulseless as that which often takes possession of people in the first great overmastering surprize and shock of grief. But after one had recovered a little, and the nerve has come to its wonted sensibility, the faith of immortality returns. There is that in every soul which knows what is the strength of life and noble deeds and aspirations; and therefore there is that in every soul which calls out for immortality.

I cannot believe, I will not believe, when I walk upon the clod, that it is my mother that I tread under foot. She that bore me, she that every year more than gave birth to me out of her own soul's aspiration--I will not believe that she is dust. Everything within me revolts at the idea.

Do two persons walk together in an inseparable union, mingling their brightest and noblest thoughts, striving for the highest ideal, like flowers that grow by the side of each other, breathing fragrance each on the other, and shining in beauty each for the other; are two persons thus twined together and bound together for life, until in some dark hour one is called and the other is left; and does the bleeding heart go down to the grave and say, "I return dust to dust?" Was that dust, then? That trustworthiness; that fidelity; that frankness of truth; that transparent honesty; that heroism of love; that disinterestedness; that fitness and exquisiteness of taste; that fervor of love; that aspiration; that power of conviction; that piety; that great hope in God--were all these elements in the soul of the companion that had disappeared but just so many phenomena of matter? And have they already collapsed and gone, like last year's flowers struck with frost, back again to the mold? In the grief of such an hour one will not let go the hope of resurrection.

Can a parent go back from the grave where he has laid his children and say, "I shall never see them more?" Even as far back as the dim twilight in which David lived, he said, "Thou shalt not come to me, but I shall go to thee"; and is it possible for the parental heart to stand in our day by the side of the grave, where the children have been put out of sight, and say, "They neither shall come to me, nor shall I go to them; they are blossoms that have fallen; they never shall bring forth fruit"? It is unnatural. It is hideous. Everything that is in man, every instinct that is best in human nature repels it.

Is not the human soul, then, itself a witness of the truth of immortality?

Men say, "You cannot prove it. There is no argument that can establish it. No man has seen it, and it cannot be substantiated. It is not a ponderable thing." Men demand that we should prove things by straight lines; by the alembic; by scales; by analysis; but I say that there is much in nature which is so high that scales and rules and alembics cannot touch it. And is not man's soul a part of nature--the highest part?

I hold that even the materialist may believe in immortality. For, altho there is a gross kind of materialism, there may be a materialism which is consistent with a belief in immortality. Because, on the supposition that the mind is matter, it must be admitted that it is incomparably superior to any other matter that we are familiar with. Is there any matter outside of mind that produces thought and feeling such as we see evolved among men? If it be the theory that mind is matter, and if the matter of which the mind is composed be so far above all other kinds of matter in its fruit and product, is it not on so high a plane as presumably not to be subject to the lower and coarser forms of examination and test? I know no reason why cerebral matter may not be eternal. I do not belong to those who take that material view of the mind; but I do not know that immortality is inconsistent even with materialism; and how much more easily may it be reconciled to the view of those who believe in the ineffable character, the imponderable, spiritual condition, of the soul!

In addition to these arguments, when we come to the Word of God, we hear the voices of those who sang and chanted in the past. We hear the disciple crying out, "Christ is risen!" and we hear the apostle preaching this new truth to mankind. So that now the heavens have been broken open. The secrets of the other life have been revealed. And is there not a presumption, following the line of a man's best manhood, that immortality is true? Does one need to go into a rigorous logical examination of this subject? Should one stand

jealously at the side of the sepulcher of Christ, and examine this matter as a policeman examines the certificate of a suspected man, or as one takes money from the hand of a cheating usurer and goes out to see if it is gold? Shall one stand at the door from which issue all the hopes that belong to the best part of man; shall one look upon that which is demanded by the very nature of his better manhood, and question it coldly, and tread it under foot?

What do we gain by obliterating this fair vision? Why should not heaven continue to shine on? Why should we not look into it, and believe that it is, and that it waits for us? Have we not the foretokens of it? Is not the analogy of the faculties one that leads us to believe that there is some such thing? Does not the nature of every man that is high and noble revolt at flesh and matter? Are they not rising toward the ineffable? Are not all the intuitions and affections of men such that, the better they are, the more they have of things that are manly, the more indispensable it is that they should have endurance, etherealization, perpetuation?

The heart and flesh cry out for God. They cry out for immortality. Not only does the Spirit from the heavenly land say to every toiling, yearning, anxious soul, "Come up hither," but every soul that is striving upward has in it, if not a vocalized aspiration, yet a mute yearning--a voice of the soul--that cries out for heaven,

> "As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!"

On such a day as this, then, in a community of moral feeling, how blest is the truth which comes to us, that we are not as the beasts that die; that we are as the gods that live! That for which we were made is immortality; and our journey is rough, straight, sharp, burdensome, with many tears. Our journey is not to the grave. I am not growing into old age to be blind, and to be deaf, and to be rheumatic, and to shrink a miserable cripple into the corner, shaking and tottering and forgetting all that I ever knew. The best part of me is untouched. The soul; the reason; the moral sense; the power to think; the power to will; the power to love; the power to admire purity, and to reach out after it--that is not touched by time, tho its instrument and means of outer demonstration be corroded and failing. No physical weakness touches the soul. Only the body is touched by sickness. And shake that down! Shake it down! Let it go! For, as the chrysalis bursts open, and the covering which confines the perfected insect is dropt, that he may come out into brightness of form and largeness of life, so this body is but a chrysalis; and when we break through it, we rise on wings by the attraction of God, and by the propulsion of our own inevitable desire and need, and are forever with the Lord.

[1] From "Plymouth Pulpit Sermons." By permission of the Congregational Sunday-School and Publishing Society.